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FREE

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2011

Activists Get Equal

By Frank Pizzoli

Describing his Get Equal experience as "humbling," student activist Luis Medina, 23, told Central Voice he'd do it again.

Medina

Late August Medina joined 92 activists from 25 states and Washington, DC who gathered in Memphis, Tennessee, to build relationships. They debated and discussed legislative vehicles to secure full LGBT equality at the federal level and organizing on the ground level in states. "With no compromises and no excuses," national coordinator Robin McGehee said at the time of the confab.

"We can no longer wait on someone else to set the agenda, to tell us when or how we can expect to gain equality," Medina said, his voice full of vigor as he reflected on the still fresh experience.

Originally from Puerto Rico and living in Lewisburg, Pa., Medina is also a member of member of the Pennsylvania Student Equality Coalition, where he serves as North Central Regional Chair of the state level committee.

"My curiosity led me to visit the Get Equal web site. I realized that this group lead, with many others, in the 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' repeal campaign," Medina sais. Dan Choi and others had chained themselves to the White House

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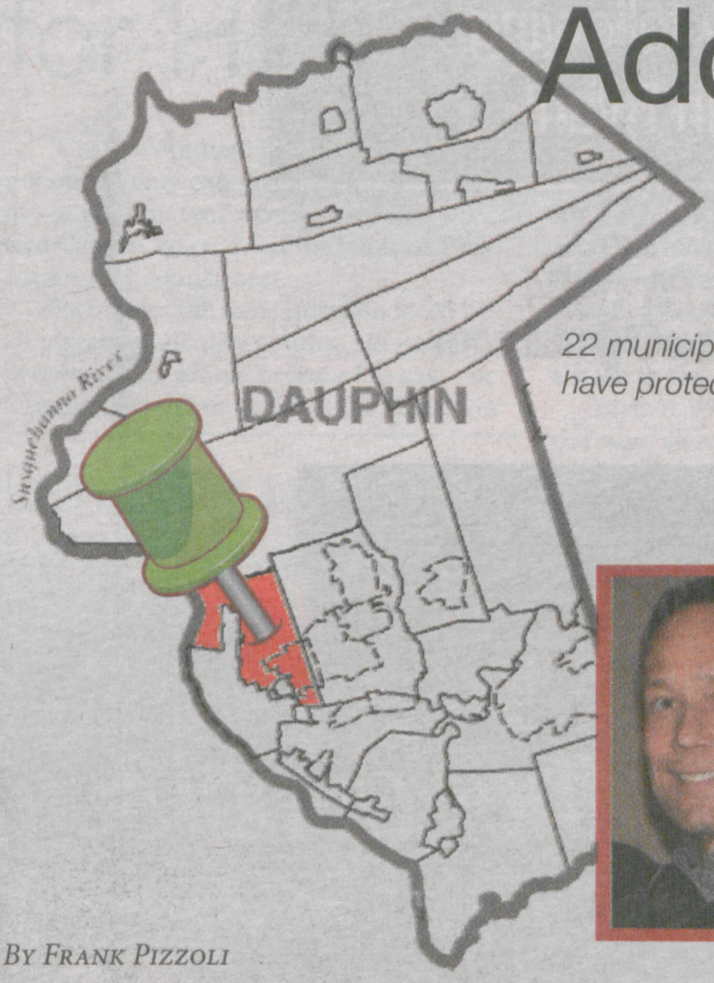
Will Susquehanna Township Adopt A Protection Ordinance?



22 municipalities have protections

Susquehanna Township resident Steve Dorko first approached Twp. Commissioners last July about a protections ordinance

By Frank Pizzoli

Citing inaction by the Pa. General Assembly, Dauphin County's Susquehanna Township has set into motion the possible passage of an ordinance banning discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and discrimination based on genetic information, according to board of commissioners president Diane Bowman.

Last July, 14-year township resident Steve Dorko formally asked commissioners to consider adopting such an ordinance. "The state legislature isn't moving on adding these protections statewide which makes local ordinances important," Dorko told Central Voice.

Twenty-two Pennsylvania municipalities have ordinance protections in place, although the state's three largest cities – Altoona, Wilkes-Barre, and Williamsport – do not. Most recently, Springfield Township in Montgomery County passed a protective ordinance, preceded by Bethlehem.

The complete list includes: Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Allentown, Erie (County), Allegheny (County), Reading, Scranton, Bethlehem, Lancaster (City), Harrisburg, York, State College, Easton, Swarthmore, Lower Merion Township, West Chester, New Hope, Landsdown, Doylestown, Conshohocken, Haverford, Springfield Township, and Montgomery County.

Elected officials are beginning to realize the benefit for their municipalities when they protect LGBT people from undue discrimination, says Adrian E. Shanker, president, Equality Pennsylvania. "It is way past time for our state legislature to follow suit and pass House Bill 300," Shanker said.

A statewide measure introduced by Rep. Dan Frankel, House Bill 300 would amend the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act to include "sexual orientation" and "gender identity or expression" languishes in that chamber. The measure does not include mention of genetic information.

Ted Martin, Equality Pennsylvania executive director, testified Sept. 19 before the House Democratic Policy Committee on HB 300.

Martin said Pennsylvanians "have shown overwhelming support for comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation and specifically HB 300, repeatedly." His organization commissioned Susquehanna Polling and Research in February and learned that state residents support anti-discrimination legislation by more than a two to one margin, or 69% in favor to 24% opposed.

State Rep. Ron Buxton's House District 103 is adjacent to Susquehanna Township where he previously served as a commissioner 1971-1975 and as president 1978-79. He was selected as Grand Marshall of the 2010 PrideFest Unity Parade and has introduced or cosponsored bills on employment non-discrimination, hate crimes, and same-sex marriage legislation.

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POLITICAL UPDATE:
Pa. House and Senate Now Have Marriage Equality Bills

By Frank Pizzoli

State Rep. Babette Josephs (D-182nd Dist.) has submitted marriage equality House Bill 1835 to the House, the first time such a measure has been introduced in the state House of Representatives. In 2009, State Sen. Daylin Leach introduced the legislature's first marriage-equality bill and resubmitted the measure earlier this year in Senate chamber. His bill drew three cosponsors and is currently in the Judiciary Committee.

Josephs told Central Voice "I think that mostly Republicans who are trapped in antiquated, backwoods ideas aren't interested in this measure." She also acknowledges that there are some Democrats who hold similar views. If Democratic legislators are doubtful of how the public feels Josephs advises that "they listen to their constituents. There is nothing else that influences a legislator more than hearing from the grass roots," Josephs in response to asking how the lgbt community and its allies can assist in moving the legislation along.

In July, New York became the sixth state to extend marriage equality to all of its citizens, forecasting an increase in state and local sales tax collections and marriage license fees, to additional hotel occupancy tax revenue in the city. According to the Independent Democratic Conference of the New York State Senate, the state expects to see as much as $391 million in increased economic activity in the first three years of the law.

Josephs also recently a measure that would add domestic partners to the list of relatives who are currently exempt from paying state inheritance taxes. "Currently, anyone in a committed, but unmarried relationship whether it is with a person of the opposite sex or same sex, is subject to a 15 percent inheritance tax on property bequeathed by his or her partner upon death," Josephs said.

Strange Bedfellows?

Politics still makes for strange bedfellows. State Rep. Josephs faces a challenge for her 182nd District seat from Philadelphia attorney Brian Sims, who last election cycle served as her campaign finance chair.

Well known in the Philadelphia lgbt community, Central Voice asked Sims why he would challenge a longtime lgbt-friendly legislator? Sims told Central Voice "I couldn't be where I am at today without Babette Josephs and her 27 years of hard work. Her successes have opened up new doors and engaged more Pennsylvanians in the political process. Now, I'd like to do my part for our communities in the State house. I want to help make Philadelphia safer, I want to help strengthen and protect public education around the state, I want to fight to expand civil rights for all of us and help create jobs."

Josephs said she "had "no interest in commenting on" Sims campaign. "There are too many things I've done on a number of issues in the community that are a matter of record," she said.

House Hearings on Discrimination

With more than a quarter of the House Democratic Policy Committees members showing up, the committee heard testimony recently on House Bill 300 resubmitted earlier this year by state Rep. Dan Frankel (D-23rd Dist.). The measure extends protections against discrimination by adding sexual orientation and gender identity to the state's Human Relations Act. Among others, testifying were Springfield Township Board of Commissioners president Jeffery Harbison, Independence Business Alliance president Evan Urbania, the National Association of Social Workers president Jenna Mehnert, and Equality Pennsylvania's Ted Martin.

Openly-gay Mike Bretz Runs for Harrisburg City Council

"City government is dysfunctional. I'm not one to only complain. I want to be part of the solution too," openly-gay Mike Bretz told Central Voice about his bid for a Harrisburg city council seat.

Bretz faces the same question faced by all players in identity politics: Do I want people to vote for me because I'm gay - or feminist, or lesbian, or fill in the blank – or because they hope I'll be an effective leader?

"I want to be a good leader, that's what I want voters to see, my skills," Bretz. Trained as a chef, he's now a sales professional and has owned his own business in Carlisle. "I bought a house and have lived in the city for two years," Bretz said, noting that he has a stake in the city.

Bretz tells Central Voice he's "middle of the road" in his fiscal outlook. "I think that we need to spend money wisely and in ways that best helps people with out causing taxes to go up." He thinks that the current city council and mayor "are spending money like it will never run out and on staff members at the expense of fireman and police."

Bretz thinks the biggest issue faced by the city is rescuing itself "from the state with the least amount of damage" as a state takeover looms. If the state takes over, he asks, "Are they going to do what is in the best interest of the bond holders and the commissioners without regard to the citizens? Are we are going to see a rise in property taxes without anything to show for it?"

He jumped into the political arena "because I wanted to get involved and see if I could make a difference." Bretz thinks it's going to take a lot of work to restore the city back to its glory and will take everyone to make that happen. "I know that I do not have all the answers and I am willing to listen to others to come up with solutions."

Mike Bretz

Bretz, 41, grew up in Shiremanstown with two brothers and two sisters. He was graduated from Paul Smith's College and has served as a high school, college, and intramural volleyball coach. He lives with his partner Algery.

Dan Miller to Run for Harrisburg Mayor

Dan Miller

Mid-September friends of Harrisburg city controller Dan Miller received emails and printed invitations for a fundraiser Sept. 22 "as He Plans a Mayoral Bid," according to the invitation.

Miller tells Central Voice "It's not a formal announcement but the time to start gathering petitions is only 18 months away, February 2013. We need to prepare as a contingency if a run is made." The primary election would take place in May 2013.

Transgender Day of Remembrance Nov. 20

Transgender Day of Remembrance is Nov. 20, starting a sunset, 4:45 p.m., on the front steps of the Capitol building. TransCentralPA will be joined by Equality Pennsylvania, the LGBT Center, PA Coalition Against Rape, and PA Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

Find out how your business can reach central PA's smart, successful gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community.

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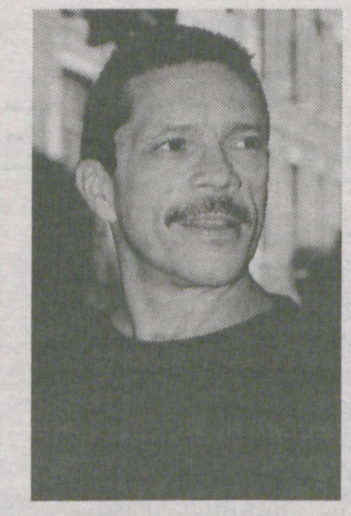
publisher's note



Frank Pizzoli

Occupy Yourself

Last spring and summer, we watched young idealistic Arabs in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria and Libya occupy sections of their cities to fight for reform and freedom. Now here in the United States we've germinated Occupy Wall St. and Occupy Harrisburg, alongside a growing number of cities nationwide.

True, the hydra-headed movement seems to have as many demands as members but that's what you get when the battle lines are drawn between the 99% versus the 1% holding all the wealth. Only unimaginative thinkers are perplexed by the lopsidedness of the equation which is as lopsided as the distribution of wealth.

Rest assured that within the multitude of issues raised by the occupiers, organizers have kept a keen focus on one element all of their issues share – the undue influence of corporate money in the political process.

No matter how you dice it down, the onion smells the same. The Supreme Court has declared corporations are people. Those same corporations (or people) own both parties of Congress. Congress, for example, passes financial reform that calls for hundreds of new ways to protect consumers. As I write, only a few of the reforms have been enacted, the remaining protections avidly stalled by corporate lobbyists.

One critic screeched on the yak-tube: "They have so many demands they don't know what they want. Student loans, housing, jobs, it goes on." Indeed the list does go on as a reflection of just how insidious corporate money has become. Student loans – privatized into corporate coffers. Housing – can you say "real estate bubble"? Jobs – do you mean jobs for which corporations receive tax breaks when shipped overseas or nonexistent US jobs?

These are tough times. Time Magazine reports 7% of Americans have lost their homes because they could not meet mortgage payments. Another 13% said they cannot afford food. An astounding 34% of Americans have recently been unemployed not by choice.

You see, corporate money is everywhere, influencing the quality of life for, well, the 99% of the people who not the remaining 1%. So perhaps a thoughtful response to the "they don't know what they want" crowd is "How could the Occupy movement know what it wants? Corporate money has infiltrated lives at so many levels how can anyone know where to start?" If 99% of the city is on fire, does it matter where one sprays the waters of dissent in order to quell the flames?

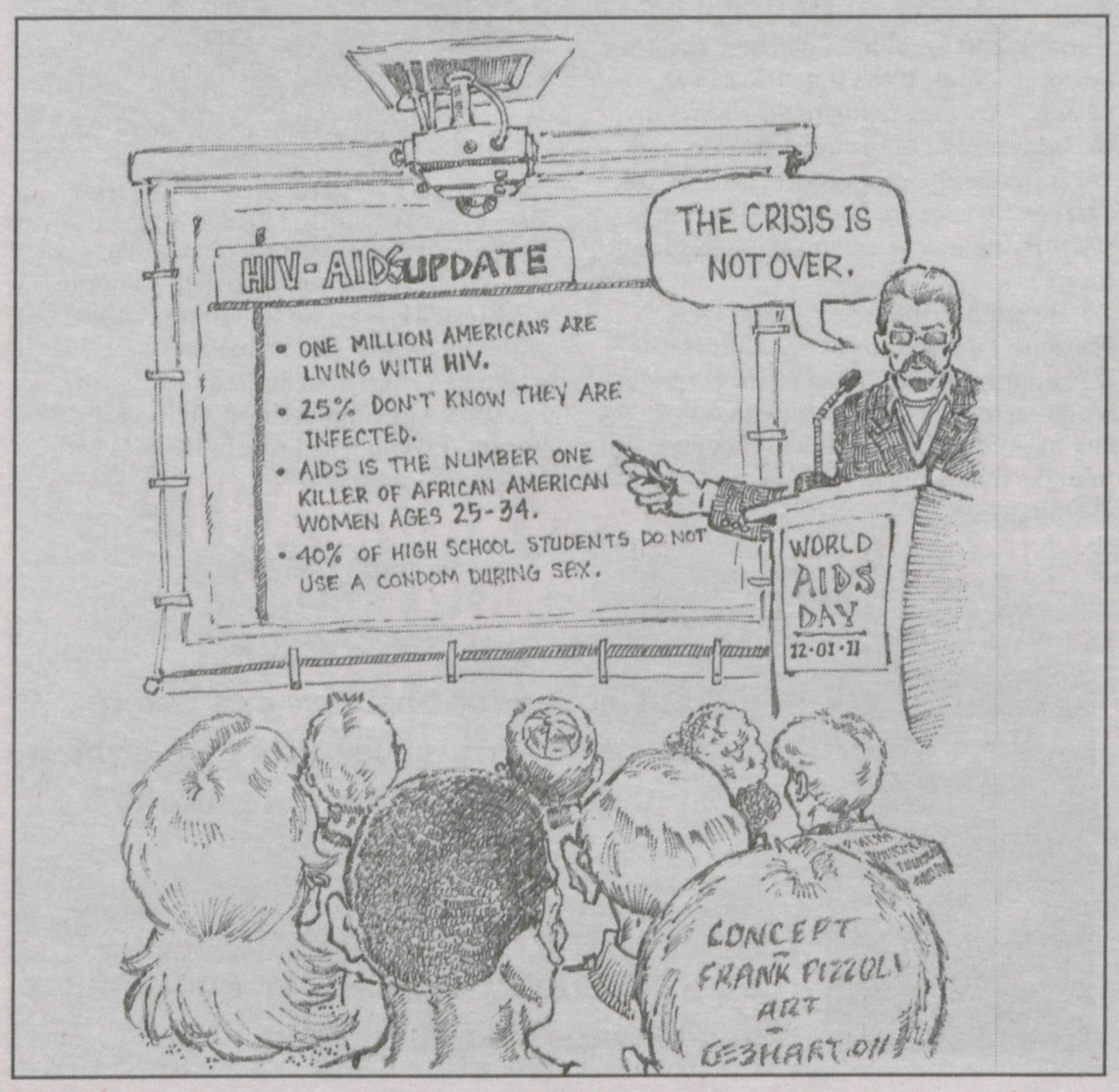
Here in Occupy Harrisburg-land, the one statement that still rings in my ears was offered by a 70-year-old man. "I come from a Communist country. I know what it's like when those at the top have everything."

voice box

Regarding 14-year-old Jamey Rodemeyer, who was buried in Buffalo, New York in late September. Hundreds attended the funeral for the high school freshman who killed himself since he could no longer stand being bullied by his peers because he was gay.

From Central Voice reader -
"A total shame that he didn't manage get the help he needed to make it past the tough times himself."

E-mail your thoughts to Central VOICE posops@aol.com



Justice4PAkids Launch Letter Campaign

Justice4Pakids launched a child sexual abuse advocacy letter campaign to each state legislator. The group had also planned subsequent mailings for each week of the legislative term.

Each hand-delivered letter will share the tragic details of one survivor's experience as well as a plea for the removal the state's civil and criminal statute of limitations on child sexual abuse.

Justice4PAKids is a newly formed coalition of child and victim advocates, lawyers, mental health professionals and concerned citizens dedicated to eliminating the Pennsylvania statutes of limitations for childhood sexual abuse. This would expose perpetrators and those who harbor them; protect children; give victims an opportunity for justice; save taxpayers money.

"There is no statute of limitations on murder," says former Philadelphia D.A. Charles Gallagher and group member. "Why should childhood sexual abuse be treated differently? The arguments against it are the same that could be used against murder statutes. They simply don't hold up."

House Bills 832 and 878, which were introduced on March 9, 2011 by Louise Bishop and Mike McGeehan respectively (both D-Phila), have been stalled in the Judiciary committee without a hearing. Committee chair, Ronald Marisco (R-Dauphin County) has not presented the bills for a move to the House floor.

Info: www.Justice4PAkids.com; info@Justice4PAkids.com

Obama on Civil Rights

One day after the Sept. 21 repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell," President Obama spoke at the United Nations General urging countries around the world to protect the rights of their gay and lesbian citizens. "No country should deny people their rights to freedom of speech and freedom of religion, but also no country should deny people their rights because of who they love," said the president during his speech. "Why we must stand up for the rights of gays and lesbians everywhere."

Supreme Among Others

Submitted by Michael Petrelis
Central Voice SF Correspondent

After being forced to slide down a rubber chute when her plane experienced trouble upon arriving in San Fransisco, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, spoke at a law conference here and said a few things on about gay rights and state-sanctioned executions. From the Chronicle:

Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, speaking to law students in San Francisco, called Thursday for equality for gays and lesbians and said the court should return to a 1972 ruling that halted executions nationwide.

"We should not be stopped from pursuing whatever talent God has given us simply because we are of a certain race, a certain religion, a certain national origin, a certain gender or gender preference," Ginsburg said at UC Hastings College of the Law.

The justices struck down state laws against gay and lesbian sexual activity in 2003 without deciding how to review other laws that treat people differently based on sexual orientation. Referring to that case, Ginsburg said the court "recognized that consensual relations between two people do no harm to anyone and cannot be subject to government prohibitions."

How refreshing to read such wisdom about the gays in a mainstream newspaper and from someone with tremendous power. Let's hope her comments echo far and wide beyond the assembled audience she spoke to and the Chronicle's readership.

But Ginsburg's enlightened words were just about gay rights. She also spoke about ending the death penalty:

The subject of capital punishment came up when Hastings Professor Joan Williams, who conducted the 90-minute question-and-answer session, asked the 78-year-old justice what she would like to accomplish in her remaining years on the court.

Joan Williams, left, poses with Ginsburg before her talk. Photo credit: James Block

"I would probably go back to the day when the Supreme Court said the death penalty could not be administered with an even hand, but that's not likely to be an opportunity for me," Ginsburg said.

She was referring to the ruling in a 1972 Georgia case that overturned all state death penalty laws, which had allowed judges and juries to impose death for any murder.

Ginsburg described review of impending executions as "a dreadful part of the business," and said she has chosen not to follow the path of the late Justices Thurgood Marshall and William Brennan - who declared in every capital case that they considered the death penalty unconstitutional - so that she could maintain a voice in the debate.

Too bad, knowing her opposition to capital punishment, that she probably won't get the chance to rule on abolishing this barbaric practice before retiring or passing away.

letters to the editor

Best yet

The Sept.-Oct. 2011 issue was one of the best yet. There were many well written pieces about important issues, and excellent editing. As a journalism professor I have watched the growth of Central Voice over the years and am pleased to see continued progress. The Voice is a crucial part of the political and social dialogue in central Pennsylvania. Keep up the good work!

Trum Simmons

Great reporting
(Gay Politicos, Sept-Oct 2011)

Frank, thanks so much for covering such an important subject and for doing it so well! Letting the community know about all the work that's going on to help further all of our civil rights is so important and I'm really thankful that you're helping us to do that. Keep up the great reporting.

Brian K. Sims, Esq.
President, Equality Pennsylvania
National Campaign Board,
The Victory Fund
Chairman, GALLOP (Gay & Lesbian Lawyers of Philadelphia)

Great job
(Gay Politicos, Sept-Oct 2011)

Thanks for writing the story! Great job.

Chris Dietz, President
Millersburg Borough Council

Very nice
(Gay Politicos, Sept-Oct 2011)

Very nice. Thank you.

Dan Miller, Controller
Harrisburg City

Hundreds Rally for Clean Air

Submitted by Sierra Club, Pa. Chapter

Hundreds of families and concerned citizens gathered at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in downtown Pittsburgh late in September for the first of three public hearings held by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on a proposed safeguard to reduce harmful air pollution from the extraction, transmission, and storage of oil and gas.

The hearings are the first-ever federally proposed safeguards aimed at cutting harmful air pollution from hydraulic fracturing.

Such federal laws are critical because they provide consistent standards that—through oversight and enforcement by the EPA and other agencies—can help to ensure that all Americans nationwide have basic protection from significant risks to their health and environment. As the oil and gas industry rapidly expands into new areas and uses new technologies to develop unconventional sources of fossil fuels, current standards and practices haven't kept pace and revision is necessary.

The oil and gas industry currently releases millions of tons of pollutants, including methane, benzene, and sulfur dioxide into our air each year, some of which create conditions that contribute to serious and lasting health problems such as asthma, cancer, and neurological issues. In addition, methane, the primary constituent of natural gas, is a greenhouse gas more than 20 times more potent than carbon dioxide and a key source of climate change.

Currently more than 50% of Pennsylvanians live in an area that doesn't meet the EPA's air quality standards for smog and over a million PA residents suffer from asthma. Yet according to the PA Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP), nearly 4,000 Marcellus Shale wells have been drilled in Pennsylvania, while the industry predicts upwards to 50,000 new wells in the state over the next two decades. According to the EPA, the oil and gas industry fractures or re-fractures more than 25,000 wells each year nationwide.

"Josh Fox had it right in the documentary movie GASLAND. His camera showed both the visible and invisible emissions of air contaminants from the gas fields for all to see," said Jeff Schmidt, Director of Sierra Club's PA Chapter. "Air pollution from gas drilling and production is indeed dangerous and is harmful to people's health. We need EPA to promptly enact strong air regulations to protect us from the natural gas industry."

Pam Judy of Clean Water Action and resident of Greene County said "The proposed EPA regulations are an important first step in addressing air quality to protect individuals and families like mine who experience health issues such as extreme headaches, nose bleeds and dizziness or can no longer spend time enjoying the outdoors because of emission fumes caused by the oil and gas industry."

"The EPA recognizes what many citizens living near oil and gas facilities have known for a long time: fossil fuel production is dirty and harmful to health," said Nadia Steinzor of Earthworks' Oil and Gas Accountability Project. "The new rules would require companies to take measures to reduce emissions and require that they be held accountable for damage, while equally protecting all Americans from pollution."

"While the proposed rules are a good first step, oil

continued on page 6

Hundreds continued from page 5

and gas operations in Pennsylvania and across the country continue to threaten public health and air quality and much work remains," said Jay Duffy, staff attorney and Marcellus Shale Program Director at the Clean Air Council. "The time is now for EPA to stand strong and live up to its name."

"How long are we going to continue to allow multi-billion dollar drilling companies such as ExxonMobil and Chevron to laugh all the way to the bank while our children gasp for air all the way to the emergency room?" said PennEnvironment's Erika Staaf. "If the industry believes it is more important to continue the status quo and put their profits ahead of the public's health, they can offer comments during the public comment period. We hope the EPA forges ahead and implements the strongest oil and gas industry air protections as soon as possible."

"While Clean Air Task Force strongly supports EPA's draft rule to regulate the volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from the oil and gas industry, they are missing a critical opportunity to directly address the industry's methane emissions," said David McCabe, Atmospheric Scientist for Clean Air Task Force. "Natural gas is mostly methane, a highly potent climate pollutant and much more dangerous, pound-for-pound, than CO2. As the gas industry is the biggest source of methane pollution in the US, mostly through intentional releases of gas into the air, EPA's final rule must also regulate leaks and wasteful releases of methane from the oil and gas industry to combat this source of dangerous climate pollution."

Janet McIntyre, a resident of Evans City and GASP member, pleaded with EPA to help, adding "I used to enjoy the clean air and water where I live, but the industry, who call themselves 'good neighbors,' has taken that from me. I want it back. But where do you turn, when it's just you fighting against those 'good neighbors'?"

"Over the past 40 years, the EPA has worked to defend clean water and air on the promise of a greener and healthier future for the American people," said Katherine Luke of the Pittsburgh Student Environmental Coalition. "Now more than ever, such regulation is necessary on oil and gas extraction to preserve the Pennsylvania landscape and carry the progressive promise of a cleaner environment through to my generation and those to come."

your voice

Who ARE these people?

Chris Tittel

By Chris Tittel
Central Voice Correspondent

Hats off to USS Spruance Commanding Officer Tate Westbrook, who told the crowd attending the recent commissioning ceremony that the U.S. Navy is proud to offer opportunities to anyone regardless of, among other things, sexual orientation.

Ironically enough, the top story on the news when I got home was President Obama rebuking Republican presidential candidates for not coming to the defense of a U.S. serviceman in Afghanistan who came out of the closet during a recent debate in Orlando.

On September 22, the soldier appeared on video in combat gear, asking the Republican candidates how they would ensure that the repeal of "Don't Ask/Don't Tell" would stand in a Republican-led administration. The audience booed the soldier.

(It was disgusting. And I don't say that as a gay man with a preference one way or the other for "Don't Ask/Don't Tell." I say it as an American who risked his own life serving three U.S. presidents and the American people in civilian missions overseas.)

On September 7, the audience at another debate applauded the news that Texas had racked up the highest number of executions in modern U.S. history under Governor Rick Perry's watch. They actually applauded.

Who ARE these people?

On September 12, several audience members at another debate shouted out an enthusiastic "Yeah!" when it was suggested that a healthy young man who doesn't invest in health insurance who suddenly finds himself at death's door with no money to cover his medical bills be left to die rather than become a burden to the American taxpayer.

Who ARE these people?

Republican Presidential Candidates: I'm having trouble siding with you on many issues, mainly because it's hard to hear your views with so many distractions from the audience. It's also difficult to side with you when I don't see any of you getting up the courage to challenge those in the party ranks who seem to prefer a society that's more blood sport than democracy. If you haven't been wondering who these people are who are repulsing undecided voters like me, maybe you should start.

BlogWatch

By Greg King

Does Wealth Trickle down?

Gaga versus Madonna. Rembrandt compared to Caravaggio. Gays juxtaposed with Nazis.

Blogs these past few months are ripe with analogies and comparisons, as they always have been.

A recent favorite posting is a photo of two male models walking the runway and holding hands. The image is juxtaposed with a drawing of two men bound in chains and being herded onto an 18th century slave ship. The caption, "Guess which one the Bible's OK with", ironically outlines one of the Bible's many contradictions such as slavery is acceptable but same sex love is not.

During the Debt Ceiling Debate, a widely circulated clip contrasted John Stewart and Republican rhetoric on taxes. Conservative politicians and pundits insisted that raising taxes on the top 2% of earners would not solve the deficit problem. Instead, they claimed the bottom 50% of our nation's households need to pay their "fair share".

Republicans pointed out that raising taxes on the top 2% would only raise $700 billion over 10 years and potentially slow investment by the rich, the "makers" in our economy. Further, conservatives held that the only viable debt solution is to make sure everyone, especially the freeloading, resource-depleting, "takers", the bottom 50% of households, pay their fair share. Those "takers", Stewart pointed out, hold $1.45 trillion worth of the nation's wealth. That's the value of everything the bottom 50% owns – cars, their stuff, clothes on their backs. All we have to do is take half of what they own and we'll have another $700 billion to put toward the deficit. Stewart concludes we should take everything they own.

Mitt Romney has famously compared corporations and people. Romney finds no differences between the two, claiming "Corporations are people too." Clearly, he didn't choose his words well, but at the base of his sentiment is the popular slogan, "What's good for General Motors is good for the country." That misconstrued comment was made in 1953 by then-GM president Charles Erwin Wilson, who was named by President Dwight Eisenhower as Secretary of Defense.

When Wilson was asked if he could make a decision adverse to the interests of GM, Wilson answered he could, but added he could not conceive of such a situation "because for years I thought what was good for the country was good for General Motors and vice versa". Later this statement was often misquoted to suggest that Wilson had said "What's good for General Motors is good for the country." At the time, the car maker was one of the world's largest employers. Only Soviet state industries employed more people. In 1955, GM became the first American corporation to pay taxes of over $1 billion.

At the bottom of Romney's statement is the conservative notion that all job creators need is unregulated resources and dollars to task toward making more money. The result, although not proven in any durable way, is economic growth, job creation, and prosperity trickles down like water to the middle and lower classes. These same fiscal conservatives argue that government spending doesn't create jobs. Oh yeah? Then why do we invade other nations and then invest zillions of dollars afterward? To kill off jobs? What about the 1 million individuals, half of them employees of private contractors, who are now employed in the world of Homeland Security paid for with government (taxpayer) money?

All of these comparisons got me thinking. Is there a comparison we can make to better understand basic differences between conservatives and liberals? Do we have the definitions as currently used reversed?

Are liberals really pie-in-the-sky humanitarians and conservatives really cynical, misanthropic, wealth accumulators? Perhaps the comparison should be between faith (conservative faith that their fiscal policies will work) and skepticism (liberal beliefs that one must be activist in the interest of a common lot). Clearly, conservatives are the ones who reflexively believe that wealth trickles down. That's an idea based on faith something will happen. Faith that the needy will be cared for by neighbors. I wonder how many fiscal conservatives calling for drastic cuts in all government programs would step forward to be cared for solely on the kindness of others?

Greg King is an avid reader and blog watcher. He and partner Charles (Oswald) King were married in Connecticut.

Despite Rally Ban Gay Serbians Gather

After Serbian Interior Ministry banned the LGBT community from staging a late September Pride march because of threats from religious fanatics and neo-Nazi groups, organizers still went ahead with a conference and some outside displays of their quest for civil rights, according to Billy Urich, a Connecticut activist who flew to Belgrade to show solidarity with the Serbians.

Photos by Billy Urich

Equality Pennsylvania Announce Endorsements for 2011 General Election

Equality Pennsylvania announced its statewide candidate endorsements for the 2011 general election.

"More and more candidates for public office understand that they need the LGBT community to win. I am confident that these endorsed candidates will support our rights once they win," commented Board President, Adrian Shanker. "I urge all LGBT voters, and voters concerned with equal rights in Pennsylvania to support these candidates any way you can."

EQPA Endorsed candidates include:

Det Ansinn - Bucks County Commissioner, Democrat*
Lin Axamethy Floyd – Delaware County Council, Democrat
Stephen J. Barron – Northampton County Controller, Democrat
Cindy Bass – Philadelphia City Council-8th District, Democrat
Don Berk – Doylestown Borough Council, Democrat
Geoffrey Brace – Lehigh County Commissioner, Democrat*
Kathryn Boockvar – Judge, Commonwealth Court, Democrat*
John C. Campbell – Harrisburg City Treasurer, Democrat*
Dan Clifford – Judge – 38th Judicial District, Republican*
Keith Collins – Delaware County Council, Democrat
Geraldine Delevich – New Hope Borough Council, Democrat*
Diane M. Ellis-Marseglia – Bucks County Commissioner, Democrat*
Jeanette Eichenwald – Allentown City Council, Democrat*
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Gloria L. Hamm – Lehigh County Commissioner, At Large, Democrat*
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Heidi Morein – Cheltenham Commissioner – Ward 7, Democrat
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Elinor Warner – Easton City Council, At Large*
David N. Wecht – Judge, Superior Court of Pennsylvania, Democrat
Julia Woldorf – Newtown Borough Council, Democrat

**candidate endorsed in Primary and General election.*

The mission of Equality Pennsylvania is to be the preeminent LGBT advocacy organization for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and work collaboratively to establish a comprehensive network of individuals and organizations united in securing equal rights for the LGBT community.

Info: www.equalitypa.org

Sept. 17, Central PA LGBT Aging Network (CPLAN) held a "Friends and Family Brunch" at What If Café, Harrisburg. The event is the first of a series of monthly CPLAN activities. Participants got to know one another and hear more about CPLAN's vision, a program of the LGBT Community Center Coalition of Central PA. From left: Louie Marven, LGBT Community Center Coalition of Central PA, Dorothy Fulton, Sharon Potter, and Pat Van Horn. Info: www.centralpalgbtcenter.org.

Central PA Pride Festival Poised for 2012 Event

Community Can Help Decide Theme & Logo

Without skipping a beat, Central PA Pride Festival leaders completed their annual reorganization election Sept. 20.

"We're ready to go to work again," newly elected Pride president Brad Martin told Central Voice today (9/21/2011). The event is the region's largest lgbt and allied event and draws as many as 5,000 to the banks of the Susquehanna River annually. The event is completely volunteer lead.

2012 Central PA Pride Festival is scheduled for July 26 - 27, 2012.

The 2011/2012 festival officers are Brad Martin, president; Diana Kuhns, 1st vice president; Adam Hagerty, 2nd vice president; Tammy Cassel, treasurer.

New board members are Nicolas Duncan, Mitchell Markelwitz, Sheila Noss, and Kelly Hoffman. They join current board members-at-large Jamie Frew, Bill Sprout, and Todd Shellenberger.

2012 Committee Chairs are Jamie Frew, entertainment; Bill Sprout and Sheila Noss, festival co-chairs; Kelly Hoffman, operations; Mitchell Markelwitz, parade; and Nicolas Duncan, volunteers.

"We'll be accepting suggestions from the community for the 2012 theme and a logo to illustrate the theme," Martin said.

Suggestions and volunteers: Mail theme and theme logo suggestions to info@prideofcentralpa.org. Volunteers are asked to send an email indicating interest.

Watch: www.prideofcentralpa.org, check website over the next few months for details on the theme and logo contest.

Hundreds Attend Funeral of Young Gay Man; Lady Gaga Grieves with Song

Fourteen year old young gay teen Jamey Rodemeyer was buried in Buffalo, New York in late September. Hundreds attended the funeral for the high school freshman who killed himself since he could no longer stand being bullied by his peers because he was gay.

Ironically at one point he even posted his own take on the "It Gets Better" campaign online and struggled to stay optimistic in his dark struggle against hate.

See Lady Gaga video at thecentralvoice.ning.com

Jamie, who proudly considered himself one of Lady Gaga's 'Little Monsters,' was buried in his "Born This Way" T-shirt. The iconic pop diva stopped the iHeart Radio Concert extravaganza in Las Vegas Saturday night to sing an emotional nearly 10 minute tribute to Jamey with rewritten words to her hit song "Hair."

Incredibly protective of her fans, Gaga had tweeted at the time of his death: "The past days I've spent reflecting, crying and yelling....bullying must become illegal. It is a hate crime. I am meeting with our President. I will not stop fighting. This must end...."

The entire LGBT community and its allies join the cry and express our deepest sympathy to his family, sending our love and support to them.

http://youtu.be/aER4KfBvpwA *http://youtu.be/aER4KfBvpwA*

Jamey Rodemeyer, age 14

Lebanon Valley College to Celebrate with Nature-based Religions

A unique opportunity to learn about Wiccan, Druid, and Heathen traditions through a demonstration ritual, music, and food may be had during a banquet is scheduled for Sun., Oct. 30, 5 p.m. in the newly renovated Mund College Center at Lebanon Valley College.

The program will open with a demonstration of ritual marking the opening of the year for many nature-based religions. Most often referred to as Samhain (a Gaelic word pronounced SOW-en), Hallows' Eve, or Halloween, the demonstration ritual will take place at an altar within a circle, with the intent of honoring an ancestor who has "passed beyond the Veil."

As part of the demonstration, participants will learn the significance of items placed upon the altar, the process by which a ritual circle is "drawn," and the significance of the ceremony. Harp music to accompany the demonstration will be provided by Celtic harpist Cathleen Sauber. Other features of the ceremony will include a crystal bowl intonation by Sofeya Puffins and drumming by Sofeya Puffins and Dream Hawk.

Billed as "A Celebration of Life Beyond the Veil through the Eyes of Many Paths," a variety of nature-based religious traditions have been incorporated into the mock ritual, including the Pennsylvania Dutch Pow Wow tradition native to this area. Following the demonstration, guests will have an opportunity to pose questions to a panel of representatives of local Wiccan, Druid and Heathen groups from central Pennsylvania.

During the question and answer session, tables will be dismissed to a fall banquet buffet set with fall-themed appetizers, entrees, and side dishes such as Harvest Soup, Smoked Pork Loin, Sweet Roots and Parsnips, and "Fried Toads." Dessert will include the opcion of Samhain Baked Apples or Chocolate Zucchini Cake.

"There's something about sharing good food, music, and entertainment that breaks down barriers," said Rev. Paul Fullmer, college chaplain and event key organizer. "We come to appreciate a variety of cultures in a very special way at the banquets, and have a great time doing so!"

"It is important to expose students and the community to the diversity of cultures that they may experience in their personal or professional lives," Fullmer states. "This particular banquet will provide an excellent opportunity for students and the local community to learn about the practice and values of religions which are often significantly misunderstood, and wrongly ridiculed as a result."

The college regularly offers banquets focusing on diverse religious and cultural experience twice a year, once each academic semester. Recent banquets featured the food, music and traditions of Sukkoth, Baisakhi, Mawlid al Nabi, and Rama Navami.

As a member of exceptional Celtic music groups such as AnamCara and the Ryeland Harp Ring of Robesonia, Cathleen Sauber has shared her talents at venues throughout central Pennsylvania, including Ten Thousand Villages and the Stoudtburg Village Garden Tour.

This Harrisburg-based husband and wife team Sofeya Puffins and Dream Hawk have been facilitators and vendors in venues throughout the United States, including the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire, Wisteria, Four Quarters, the Spoutwood Farm Fairy Festival, and the New York Faerie Festival. Sofeya Puffins is a singer, song writer, bardic storyteller, and stained glass artist. In addition to drumming, Dream Hawk studies the arts of fire spinning and web design.

Tickets: $12 general admission; $30 family with children. LVC are eligible for meal exchange. Space limited. Reservations: Office of Spiritual Life at (717) 867-6135 by Tues., Oct. 25.

Program info: Office of Spiritual Life, (717) 867-6135, or John Hopewell, executive chef, (717) 867-6116 for information on foods served in relation to the celebration.

Harrisburg Gay Men's Chorus: "Chorus Christmas Capers, Cubed!"

Join Harrisburg Gay Men's Chorus Sun., Dec. 4, 4 p.m. and 7 p.m., Harrisburg Maennerchor, 221 North Street, Harrisburg, Pa. 17101. Admission is $10.

Just in time to make you laugh and giggle as the frantic pace of the holiday season approaches, the Harrisburg Gay Men's Chorus proudly announces its 3rd annual "Chorus Christmas Capers, Cubed!"

From the same folks who brought you "The 12 Groovy Days of Christmas" and "No Well" comes another light-hearted look at the holiday season. The concert will feature a wonderful mix of uplifting holiday favorites and some not-so-traditional spins on other well-known songs. You may just find yourself parading around like a wooden soldier, rockin' around a Christmas tree, or perhaps even ding-a-linging like a jingle bell! The audience will be treated to several numbers performed by the full chorus and also a number of soloists and small ensembles.

Artistic Director David Walker has designed a program that is sure to entertain both novice and seasoned Christmas choral fans. The chorus' mission continues to be one of inclusion and of education for new audiences while continuing its tradition of fusing humor and sentiment to create an unforgettable musical experience.

Info: http://www.harrisburgmenschorus.

Lancaster events

Nov. 4 - 5 - Sunset Tours - The Amish Farm & House, 2395 Route 30 East (Lincoln Highway), Lancaster, PA 17602. 717-394-6185.

Nov. 11 - 2nd Friday in Lititz - Downtown, Main & Broad Streets, Lititz, PA 17543. Shops, restaurants, and galleries will be open on Main and Broad streets as musicians, dancers, artists and entertainers will dot the sidewalks, porches, and businesses throughout the downtown streets. 5-9 p.m.

Dec. 3 - Christmas Tree Lighting - Manheim Square, Manheim, PA 17545, 717-665-1762. Come out for this real life 'Whoville' experience with hot chocolate, caroling, and a community brass band. Event entertainment features local students from our own Crickets School for the Performing Arts sharing dance numbers from the Nutcracker Ballet. 7:00pm

Dec. 22 – 31, Holiday Season - Laserdome. Please check dates & times with venue

Holiday Season - Laserdome, 2050 Auction Rd., along Rt. 283 at the Rt. 230 Mt. Joy exit, Manheim, PA 17545, 717-492-0002. "Super Play Package" includes: 2 - 40 minute sessions and unlimited laser concerts.

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Alder Health Services Hosts Chamber

Showing off their newly-opened primary care practice suites, Alder Health Services recently hosted The Central Pennsylvania Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce. Now accepting patients, the primary care practice is devoted to serving the needs of the regions LGBT community and other underserved populations. Alderhealth.org

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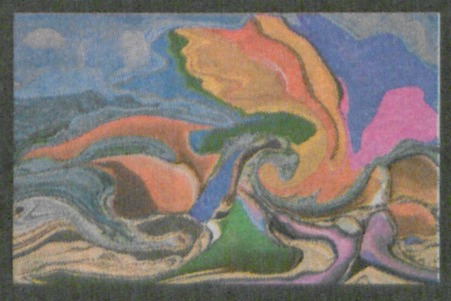

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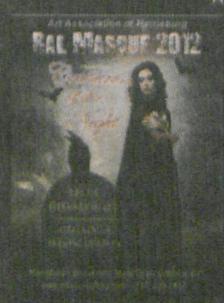

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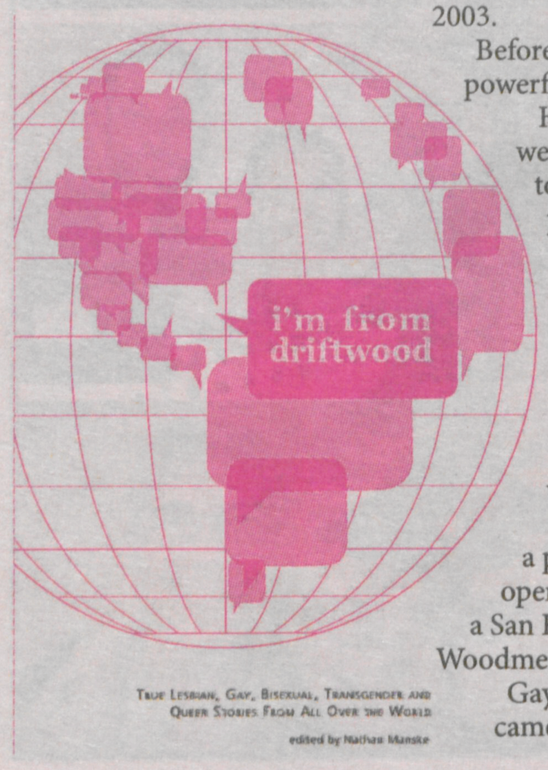

By Frank Pizzoli

"I think about all the armies of one fighting for civil rights in their small town," Nathan Manske tells Central Voice. He's referring to the legions of lgbt people he's met on his four-month, 50-state tour of 170 municipalities that shapes his work with "I'm from Driftwood," first a website and now a 166-page book with the same name that portrays first-person stories of gay people across the country.

Manske spent a weekend in Harrisburg during Central PA Pride Festival where he explained that, as creator of the film project and book, he himself is indeed from Driftwood, Texas, but has lived in Brooklyn since 2003.

Before creating IFD, Mankse worked four years in advertising with a powerful pen.

His Chemistry.com television commercials raised awareness as well as eyebrows by taking on eHarmony's discriminatory policies towards gays and lesbians. eHarmony has since changed their policies. He's written the third X-Men film's interactive website for 20th Century Fox, as well as work for Match.com, Lincoln, Sony, Comcast, Howard Johnson's, Diet Pepsi, Hertz, and Showtime.

So what's the point of all these true stories by gay people from all over? There's a story for that Manske explains.

"The morning after I watched Milk, would you believe I was inspired?" he asks. Although impressed with the movie, what inspired him more was Milk the person.

An image Mankse recalled wasn't even in the film. "It was a photo of assassinated Supervisor Harvey Milk, one of the first openly gay elected officials in the U.S., riding on the hood of a car in a San Francisco Gay Pride march, holding a sign that reads, "I'm From Woodmere, N.Y."

Gay folklore says the sign was intended to show how far people came to attend the San Francisco rally, but the sign meant something more to Mankse. "It meant that there are gay people in every small town and every big city across America and the world. I responded to Harvey's sign with I'm from Driftwood."

The tale of Manske's film project has the feel of a Hollywood story itself. His brother drove the vehicle and they accomplished their goal on a leanly budgeted business plan. Every bit of their challenging journey was worth it he says because "another theme emerged, that it's not easy living in a big city either. It's not always the Mecca a troubled young person may think it is," he says.

Photos by Michael J. Cargill

Another inspiration for Manske's book and film project are the "coming out" struggles experienced by so many teens in hostile environments – schools, churches, clubs, their own homes – and a suicide rate four times higher than straight kids. The stories on film and in the book show anti-gay people and organizations "we're not all that different after all. We all have stories and problems and loves and lives just like everyone else. So maybe we should all be treated like everyone else, too," Manske says.

To gay teens the message is "you are not alone." We want our peers to know other people have dealt with similar situations, families, communities and churches, and have overcome. They live happy lives," Mankse says.

Info: www.imfromdriftwood.com
Contact: Nathan Manske, (347) 423-4444
Contact: Jay Blotcher, (845) 612-9837

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA GAY AND LESBIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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HIGHMARK. BLUE SHIELD

Occupy Harrisburg Draws Full House

By Frank Pizzoli
Central Voice
thecentralvoice.ning.com
Oct. 5, 2011

Democracy is a messy stew. It's also delicious.

On Oct. 5 about 100 people filled the community room of Metropolitan Community Church of the Spirit, Jefferson Street, Harrisburg.

Tattoos and piercings mingled with tweeds and button downs. New and nostalgic plaids crowded next to children and senior citizens. At least one elected official was there. There were pastors, a rabbi, and union representatives. A veteran of both the Iraqi and Afghan Wars stood next to pink and green hair. The visual was a colorful Kasbah of dissent.

Comments came from both 60s veteran radicals and nouveau activists. "You guys have Facebook too?" asked one young woman.

Although the impromptu organization Occupy Harrisburg is meant to be a leaderless one, Alex Knapp moderated the discussion. Another volunteer Alex Blitzer created their online presence. Knapp instructed participants to hand an invisible baton to the next speaker. No soap-boxing and keep it short.

The originally proposed reason to meet – ousting of Harrisburg Mayor Linda Thompson – faded early in the discussion. Pretty quickly, as these types of assemblies go, the group decided that although they had numerous concerns, they all had one thing in common – Wall Street. Their nemesis is the 1% of the nation who owns most of the wealth and is symbolized by Wall Street.

Alex Knapp
Occupy Harrisburg discussion leader

"If we're the 99% it stands to reason we're going to have issues all over the place," said one participant. "But we agree that we're plain tired of not having a say on issues important to us – health care, jobs, stagnant wages," she continued. A friend chimed in with "the 1% on Wall Street wants us arguing on Main Street. If we remain divided, they remain impenetrable."

Harrisburg City Councilman Brad Koplinski said, "You can't get 100 people together in Harrisburg to do anything," amazed at the turnout. He said, "This is precisely the message we've been trying to deliver about Harrisburg's fiscal crisis. The solutions offered take care of Wall Street while leaving Main Street holding debt."

Before too long the diversity of issues heating up the room cooled off into consensus.

Those assembled agreed that their diversity of issues was their strength.

What were their thoughts after the meeting?

"This is a revolution," said one attendee.

"I'm pissed off; I work hard, for what? Wall Street wants to take every penny from everyone else. Our country is in the mess it's in because of their greed and they just aren't going to stop unless we stand up," groused another participant.

"Are politics are broken," said one individual. "Money controls everything, controls both political parties. The Supreme Court tells us corporations are people and have the same rights. No, they're not. No, they don't. Time for action."

"I come from a Communist country. I know what it's like when those at the top have everything," said one man.

Is tonight's Occupy Harrisburg meeting, and gatherings elsewhere around the nation where the "Occupy" movement is coalescing, a center/left version of the Patriot Party? "Yes, it is," said one young man.

Harrisburg Hope Panel Discussion

About 125 people gathered at Midtown Scholar Bookstore Oct. 6 to hear a panel assembled by Harrisburg Hope discuss the capital city's looming takeover by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Food and refreshments were provided by Broad Street Market. Harrisburg Hope president Alan Kennedy-Shaffer moderated the panel. From the left, Joyce Davis, World Affairs Council; Rep. Glen Grell, author of takeover legislation; city councilman Kelly Summerford; Robert Philbin, representing the city; J. Marc Kurowski, Harrisburg Authority chairman.

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Chamber on the move

By Bill Krenz

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA GAY AND LESBIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Chamber 5th Anniversary Annual Meeting Jan. 21

On Sat., Jan. 21, 2012, the chamber celebrates its 5th Anniversary at its Annual Meeting & Dinner. The celebration will be held at the newly renovated Best Western Premier The Central Hotel & Conference Center. There will be a reception and dinner, followed by a presentation and keynote speaker, John J. 'SKI' Sygielski, President of HACC.

The evening concludes with a performance by national comedian, Suzanne Westenhoefer.

Please consider sponsoring and attending this event!

Out and Equal

Members of the chamber board attended an Out and Equal event on Fri., Sept. 23, at The Hershey Company corporate offices. The chamber presented information on the LGBTE supplier diversity certification. Consider having your company get certified as an LGBTE supplier of services. This certification is made possible by the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, of which the CPGLCC is an affiliate member.

CURVE

The board attended the 5th anniversary of The CURVE, a program of Planned Parenthood of Central PA. Debbie Gable, a CPGLCC Board Member, started the program for LGBTQA youth in 2006. The well-attended event featured testimonials from past and current youth using services of the program.

Improvements

Also note that the chamber's website is undergoing improvements, including registration and PayPal payment options. There will soon be a new business calendar so chamber members can sign in and post their own business events to the web site calendar. These enhancements continue to move the CPGLCC forward with current technology, as well as simplifying chamber member interaction with the organization.

Past Events

The September Mixer was held on Sept. 27 at the new offices of Alder Health Services, Harrisburg. Alder Health is broadening its health-related services to the LGBT community. The facility isa quite impressive and exemplified the continued growth and expansion this organization has seen in the last few years.

The October mixer was held on Oct. 13 at the First Reformed United Church of Christ, Lancaster, to another large gathering of members.

Future Events

The November 8th mixer is to be at a grand opening of a Members 1st Federal Credit Union branch office in Lancaster.

The chamber is a Silver Sponsor of FAB this year. Be sure to attend their event on Nov. 12 in Lancaster.

On Dec. 8, Gregory Jordanoff, proprietor of Fete Events is going to have (surprise) another spectacular event planned at the Harrisburg Historical Building at 3rd and Verbeke Streets in Harrisburg.

And wait – there is more – there is going to be an 'after party' once the chamber mixer is completed!

See the web site for updates.

Remember to RSVP for mixer events at http://cpgalcoc.camp9.org .

The networking opportunities continue to be a great way to meet people and network.

The chamber continues to look for volunteers from the business community to participate in our various committee meetings.

If you are thinking of joining an LGBT professional organization, please visit our web site and check out the various committees.

Contact us if you can help out. Be sure to check out our website for a directory of LGBT owned and LGBT friendly businesses. The chamber web site is the best source to determine where our community needs to spend its money!

Chamber web site: www.cpglcc.org

York events

YORK EXPO SCHEDULE

Nov. 6, York Doll, Toy & Teddy Bear Show

Nov. 27, 30th Annual Greater York Toy Extravaganza

Medicare Enforces Equal Visitation Rights

Rules finalized last year empower patients to designate their own visitors, including same-sex partners

Today, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced new guidance to support enforcement of rules that protect hospital patients' right to choose their own visitors during a hospital stay, including a visitor who is a same-sex domestic partner. These rules, finalized by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in November, apply to all hospitals that participate in Medicare and Medicaid. The guidance also supports enforcement of the right of patients to designate the person of their choice, including a same-sex partner, to make medical decisions on their behalf should they become incapacitated.

"Couples take a vow to be with each other in sickness and in health and it is unacceptable that, in the past, some same-sex partners were denied the right to visit their loved ones in times of need," said HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius. "We are releasing guidance for enforcing new rules that give all patients, including those with same-sex partners, the right to choose who can visit them in the hospital as well as enhancing existing guidance regarding the right to choose who will help make medical decisions on their behalf."

The rules updated the Conditions of Participation (CoPs), which are the health and safety standards all Medicare- and Medicaid-participating hospitals and critical access hospitals must meet, and apply to all patients of those hospitals even if they are not on Medicare or Medicaid. Among other things, the CoPs require hospitals to explain to all patients their right to choose who may visit them during their inpatient stay, regardless of whether the visitor is a family member, a spouse, a domestic partner (including a same-sex domestic partner), or another type of visitor, as well as their right to withdraw such consent to visitation at any time.

Existing CoPs also protect the rights of hospital patients to have representatives who can act on their behalf. HHS has updated the guidance for these rules to emphasize that hospitals should give deference to patients' wishes concerning their representatives, whether expressed in writing, orally, or through other evidence, unless prohibited by state law. The guidance issued today is intended to make it easier for family members, including a same-sex domestic partner, to make informed care decisions for loved ones who have become incapacitated.

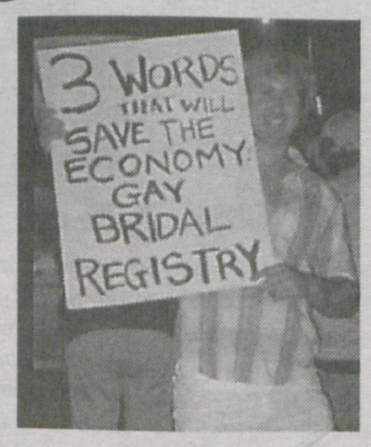
CMS today sent a letter to State Survey Agencies, which conduct on-site inspections of hospitals on behalf of CMS. The letter highlights the equal visitation and representation rights requirements and directs SSAs to be aware of the guidance when evaluating hospitals' compliance with CoPs.

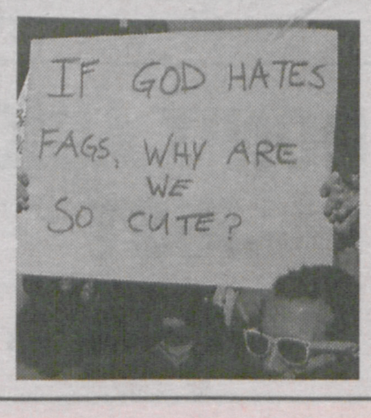
"This announcement is another step toward equal rights for all Americans, and it is another step toward putting the patient at the center of our health care system," said CMS Administrator Donald M. Berwick, M.D. "All patients should be afforded the same rights and privileges when they enter our health care system, and that includes the same opportunity to see their significant other."

In other news of interest to the LGBT community, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), another agency of the Department of Health and Human Services, today announced a $248,000 grant to the Fenway Institute** to create a National Training and Technical Assistance Center to help community health centers improve the health of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) populations.

Gay Marriage: *Signs of the Times*

Political protests are always a little more fun when the protesters are a little more fabulous. With New York's legalization of gay marriage, the writing appears to be on the wall for opponents of marriage equality. The community will definitely miss the "signs of the times" when the battle is finally over nationwide.





Planned Parenthood PA Rally

In the first six months of 2011, Pennsylvania lawmakers spent 30% of their days at the Capitol working to restrict access to safe, legal abortion, says Sari Stevens, Planned Parenthood PA executive director. Approaching the Sept. 27 rally, Stevens said she'd rather the Pa. General Assembly turn their attention to more pressing problems like the economy than placing further restrictions on access to legal and safe abortions.

"We've polled 1,000 people and two said abortion was on the top of their list," Stevens told Central Voice. In contrast, the US Census Bureau one week before the rally reported that 1 in 5, or 20%, of Dauphin County families with children under 18 years of age live in poverty. The state figure is 15.9% while the national rate is 17.9%.

"The first vote of the session was on Senate Bill 3 which limits abortion coverage that may be purchased under "health care exchanges," Stevens points out. States are now establishing exchanges as part of the national health care plan that goes into effect between now and 2014.

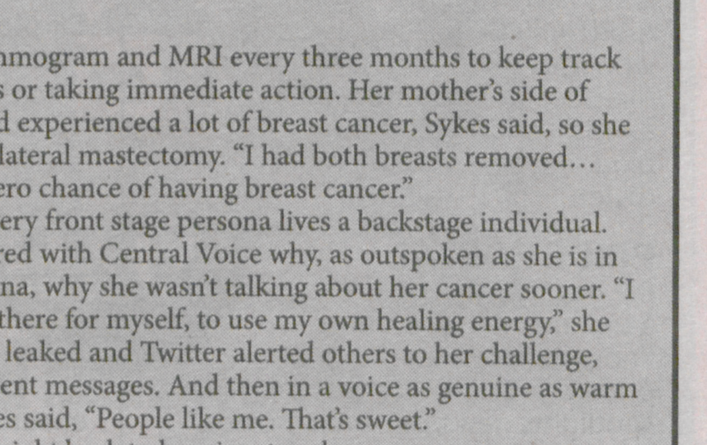
State Rep. Dan Frankel, D-Allegheny, who spoke at the rally, said majority Republicans in the legislature are pushing anti-choice bills that would restrict women's rights and potentially harm their health. Frankel said "extremists want to take this opportunity to create new regulations that that will force many clinics to close, as happened under a similar law in Texas, or raise the cost by up to $1,000, putting these services out of reach for many women or driving them to seek cheaper, underground illegal abortions."

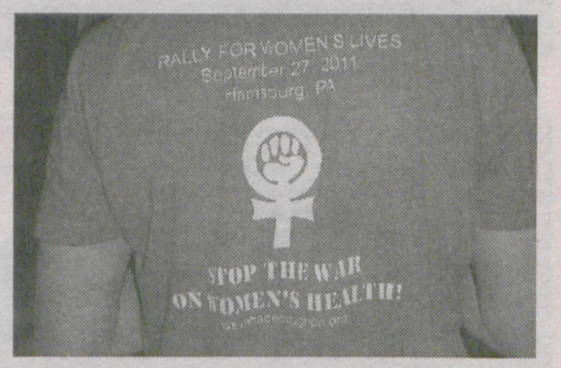
Driving the Harrisburg debate is the unfortunate case of Kermit Gosnell, the Philadelphia doctor facing eight counts of murder in the deaths of a female patient and seven babies. He had allegedly performed abortions on them under unsafe conditions in his clinic.

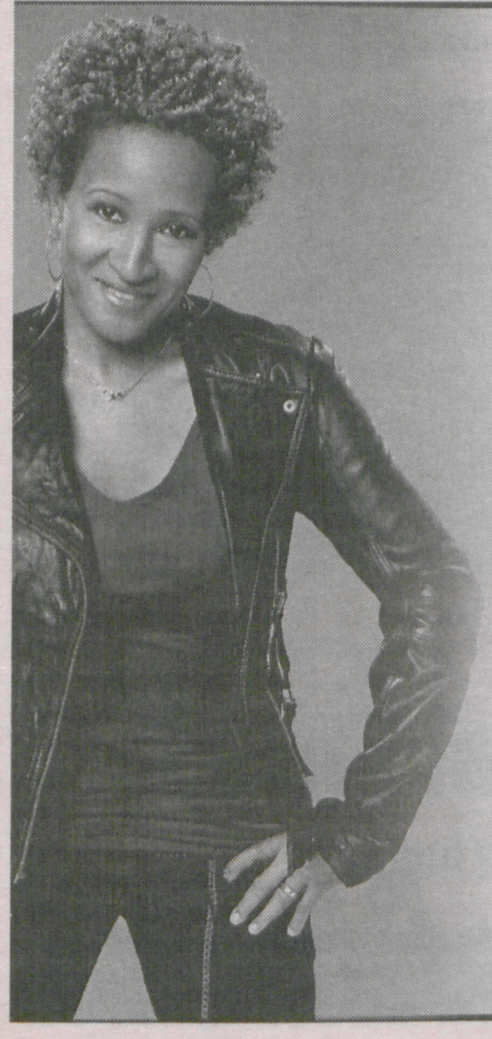
Stevens reports that her counterparts in the southeastern part of the state had informed the Pa. Dept. of Health about potential abuses. State regulators ignored grievances filed against Gosnell, who reportedly made millions of dollars over the past 30 years by performing illegal, late-term abortions, and they failed to visit or inspect his clinic since 1993, District Attorney Seth Williams said during Gosnell's initial court appearance.

"There are 37,000 legal abortions performed in Pennsylvania annually. The municipality of State College has that many residents," Stevens said. Gosnell is the exception not the rule, Stevens says in arguing against further abortion restrictions.

A typical form of legislative action involves not outright banning of abortion but to make the rules about how the procedure can be performed so restrictive and complicated "no one can possibly comply," Stevens said. We've had enough," Stevens said, using the words that have become the event's rallying cry. Individuals and organizations from Pittsburgh, suburban Philadelphia, and Allentown attended.







Wanda Sykes Funny and Human

Talks to Central Voice about Her Breast Cancer
By Frank Pizzoli

Now that she's back after a bilateral mastectomy, comedian Wanda Sykes tells Central Voice she isn't doing a 'cancer show' while making appearances. She's not shunning her disease. Embracing it is more apt. Her heart and soul and signature humor thrive.

Emmy-winning Sykes, 47, queen of wisecracks and one-liners, mid-September told viewers of The Ellen DeGeneres Show about her run in with breast cancer. She's the mother of 2 ½-year-old twins, Olivia and Lucas, and lives with wife Alex.

Even in the face of breast cancer, Sykes' humor never left her.

A few days after the Ellen Show, Sykes told the New York Daily News, "I had real big boobs, and I just got tired of knocking over stuff." She said, "Every time I eat … Oh, lord. I'd carry a Tide stick everywhere I go. My back was sore, so it was time to have a reduction."

Sykes explained that while pursuing breast reduction last February until after the reduction lab work showed she had DCIS [ductal carcinoma in situ] in her left breast.

"I was very, very lucky because DCIS is basically stage-zero cancer," Sykes explained.

With Sykes cancer in its earliest stage, she could choose between having a mammogram and MRI every three months to keep track of its progress or taking immediate action. Her mother's side of the family had experienced a lot of breast cancer, Sykes said, so she opted for a bilateral mastectomy. "I had both breasts removed… Now I have zero chance of having breast cancer."

Within every front stage persona lives a backstage individual.

Sykes shared with Central Voice why, as outspoken as she is in the public arena, why she wasn't talking about her cancer sooner. "I needed to be there for myself, to use my own healing energy," she said. As word leaked and Twitter alerted others to her challenge, well wishers sent messages. And then in a voice as genuine as warm apple pie Sykes said, "People like me. That's sweet."

And then right back to her signature humor.

"How many things could I have? I'm black, then lesbian. I can't be a poster child for everything!" she joked. "At least with the LGBT issues we get a parade, we get a float, it's a party." Sykes' breast cancer was anything but a party but her humorous soul has shone through the hardship.

FACT: National Cancer Institute estimates for 2011 new cases and deaths from breast cancer in the US - New cases: 230,480 (female); 2,140 (male); Deaths: 39,520 (female); 450 (male)

RESOURCE: What You Need to Know about Breast Cancer, online booklet

http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/wyntk/breast

AARP Gay Friendly

By Frank Pizzoli

"I've been active with AARP for about 10 years," says Douglas Dockey, a retired Lancaster educator. After teaching school for 30 years he said, "I don't have a career to protect anymore."

Dockey's fears about career protection are based in reality. It remains legal in Pennsylvania to fire someone because they are gay, although a recently unveiled statewide poll by Equality Pennsylvania indicates 70 % support for legislation protecting people who live or work in the state from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

Even with such a high level of support among those surveyed, including Republicans, House Bill 300 introduced by State Rep. Dan Frankel, D-Allegheny, languishes in committee. The measure addresses discrimination in employment, housing, credit and public accommodations. State Sen. Pat Browne, R-Lehigh/Northampton/Monroe, is expected to introduce the legislation in the Senate.

Dockey has been able to find a comfort zone within the larger AARP setting. "When I first started I would never have mentioned that I was gay," he said. "But now I've found my niche," Dockey shares. General AARP chapters within local counties include Dauphin (2), Lancaster (3), York (6), Adams (2), Cumberland (6).

Dockey is also involved with CPLAN, Central PA LGBT Aging Network, affiliated with the LGBT Community Center, a group which has been meeting to discuss ways to meets the needs of the region's lgbt aging population.

Overall, AARP is an embracing organization for gay seniors and has staffed booths at Central PA Pride Festival, Lehigh Valley Pride, and Philadelphia's Pride celebration.

The organization has worked on a local level to promote equality when last summer a local chapter in Bethlehem responded to a request by Adrian Shanker, president, Equality Pennsylvania, to help by supporting passage of a local civil rights ordinance.

With the Bethlehem ordinance, Jim Palmquist, 65, a former ex-navy career pilot, came into play in his role as a regional volunteer leader serving Lehigh, Northampton, Carbon, and Berk counties which represents about 100,000 members. He's been an AARP member for 15 years and an active volunteer for the last two.

Douglas Dockey at Central PA Pridefest.

"Adrian came up with the idea that AARP support would be significant," Palmquist said. They asked the organization for support and got it. Palmquist notes AARP founder Ethel Percy Andrus statement, "What we do, we do for all." He thinks the organization has lived up to that vision.

Shanker told Central Voice "Bethlehem had to do this because our legislators in Harrisburg have failed to protect us from discrimination, so we are forced to go city to city to ensure our basic civil rights. Hopefully Harrisburg will learn, as Bethlehem did, that basic civil rights are simply not a controversial issue."

Ted Martin, Equality Pennsylvania's executive director, says AARP's support shouldn't be surprising. "Very soon, the veterans of Stonewall and all those folks who began living their lives "out" as lesbians and gay men because of that event will start using AARP services," he notes.

AARP Gay-friendly Resources

PRISM NETWORK
Internally, the PRiSM Network is an online community that focuses on issues of interest to lgbt members, allies, volunteers and staff. "It's where you can go, open an account, and jump into sharing your ideas and thoughts," says local AARP volunteer Douglas Dockey, who uses the resource as both a member and volunteer. Allows for discussion groups and blogging and has a member roster.

PRIDE PORTAL
For gay members there's a second online resource known as www.aarp.org/pride. The online destination spotlights news, personal finance, relationships, travel and other topics of concern to older gay Americans, and their family and friends. It also provides information about AARP's positions and advocacy efforts in this arena. "Spotlight" section is as au currant as any gay media source covering topics like gay marriage, gay children, estate planning, and dating guides. They don't shy away from HIV.

AARP Policies Relating to the LGBT Community

Taxes
Federal and state estate and inheritance taxes should affect only the largest transfers, and surviving spouses, domestic partners, and family farms and businesses should be protected from excessive burdens. Heirs should have some protection against the need to liquidate assets to pay taxes.

Employment
Freedom from discrimination is a fundamental right. All workers - regardless of age, sex, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, religion, or national origin - deserve to be protected from arbitrary discrimination in all aspects of employment, including hiring, compensation, promotion, termination and training.
Congress should improve the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) by lowering the jurisdictional threshold to employers with fewer employees, while still excluding very small employers; ensuring that the leave is compensated; and covering all primary caregivers regardless of family relationship.

Long-term care
Antidiscrimination laws should be amended to include sexual orientation and ensure the right of same-sex couples to be housed together in assisted-living facilities, nursing homes and other LTSS (long term services and support) settings.
Unmarried domestic partners and spouses in same-sex marriages should be provided all the financial protections afforded opposite- sex community spouses (when accessing Medicaid for long-term care).

Retirement income
AARP supports programs and policies that permit people in kinship care situations and others with an insurable interest in a pensioner to share in or receive survivor benefits from private pensions.

Personal and Legal Rights
The federal and state governments should ensure that all patients have the right to designate the visitors they want in the hospital, without regard to marital status, status as a family member, sexual orientation, or other factors. Designated visitors should include individuals designated by legally valid advance directives such as health care powers of attorney.
States also should work to ensure that domestic violence and APS agencies are responsive to the particular needs of older abused spouses and partners.
Government agencies should vigorously enforce the fundamental right of all people to be free from discrimination.

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610-398-3074
muttnjeff@enter.net

AARP®

Open Diversity

Right: Oct. 1, less than a month after repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," Central Voice correspondent Chris Tittel attended the commissioning of the USS Spruance at Key West's Outer Mole. The new destroyer will be ported in San Diego. With about 1,000 people attending, commissioning speeches noted that the U.S. Navy is proud of its diversity and ability to offer anyone the opportunity to be part of the ranks regardless of, among other things, sexual orientation. Bottom left: Monroe County Mayor Heather Carruthers and her partner, Coleen Fitzsimmons, were among the audience members who heard U.S. Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen deliver an address on the commissioning from the deck of the destroyer. Bottom right: Ros-Lehtinen was recently recognized as the first Republican in Congress to co-sponsor legislation to repeal the federal ban on gay marriage. She is also the mother of Rodrigo Lehtinen (born Amanda Michelle Lehtinen), a transgender LGBT rights advocate.

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Activists Get Equal

cont'd from page 1

fence in the months preceding the now-repealed DADT law. "I wanted to know more about organizing and about using direct action as means to gain full equality and nothing less," Medina said.

Medina sees himself as a "tax paying citizen of the United States" as points out that he and his activist colleagues "are aware that LGBTQ Pennsylvanians do not have equal protections when it comes to employment, marriage and safe schools." He is inspired by a quote picked up in Tennessee: We Band together to defeat the shadows of oppression, it is our voices, our actions, our courage and unity that give us the power to achieve full equality."

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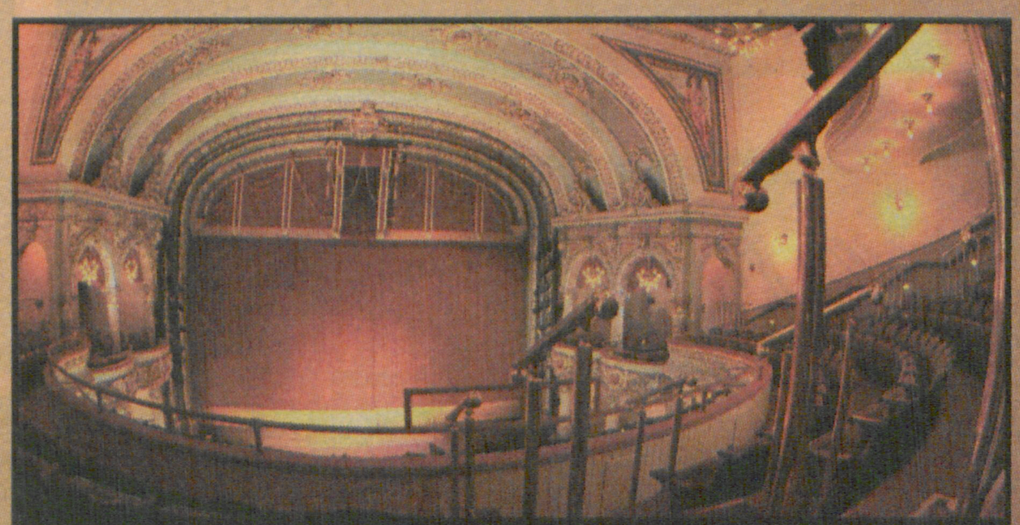

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5th Anniversary of THE CURVE

Inspired by a York College student, THE CURVE celebrated its 5th anniversary Sept. 18 at Capital Theatre, York. The group serves youth 14- 21 by providing a biweekly safe and supportive environment for educational, advocacy and recreational activities.

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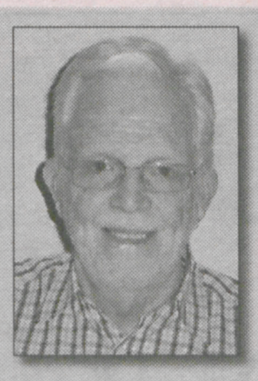

By Trum Simmons

All in the Family

November and December bring several holidays in quick succession. There really is nothing like this stretch of the calendar, what with all the emphasis on celebrating and having a good time with family and friends. Oh—and buying lots of things. Our consumer society is at its apogee this time of the year.

You can talk all you want about counting our blessings and peace on earth, but be sure to buy lots of stuff along the way. Eat until you can't move, and then go out on Black Friday ready to land the best sale items. Worry for a month about what to buy for "the person who has everything," or about finding the perfect gift.

'Tis the season of thankfulness and the season to be jolly, and also the season of stress, stress, stress—much of it positive, but much of it negative. There are many of us who can't wait for January to roll around so that we can stop worrying that we are somehow not measuring up to the ideals and images of perfection promoted by mass media.

One of the biggest stressors at this time of year is the emphasis on family, and this is particularly true for LGBTQ folks. Mainstream America continues to promote the myth of the perfect, heterosexual family from some golden age back in the day. (Apparently it was either back in the 1950s or sometime in the 1800s, depending on who's talking.)

Before we go any further, let me say that things are getting better. More and more families now embrace their LGBTQ members—many more, if I can go by the stories my college students tell me. I can see major improvement from the 1970s when I came to central Pennsylvania, and major improvement from the mid-1990s when I started advising our HACC Allies group.

I remember a young gay man describing Thanksgiving at his house back then. What was it like? we asked. "Oh, you know," he said, "we sat around and ate ourselves silly and made jokes about gays and lesbians." You can understand that he was not exactly out to his family during this time.

Many LGBTQ folks continue to tread carefully around the matter of family during the holidays. There is still much too much stress and drama around who is welcome where in the traditional family holiday gatherings. Sadly, too many people continue to be ostracized by those who "love" them.

I tread carefully now, having used the L-word. I often say to my classes that love is the scariest four-letter word in the language. We use it far more often than those other four-letter words that provoke so much controversy, yet the misuse and abuse of love has caused more harm than all the others combined. What we need during the holiday season, of course, is the love that accepts and embraces a person as he or she is, no exceptions. Is anything short of that really love at all?

Today, there are many LGBTQ families celebrating the holidays that don't have to worry about the acceptance issue. It is gratifying to see that mainstream culture has finally begun to recognize the tremendous diversity of today's American family, and to know that a gay couple can have their family celebration with their kids and enjoy the complete holiday experience.

It's about time.

As for those other stressors, the ones that come from the advertising pressures of our consumer society, they continue to be a big problem. And I'm not sure we can do much about them, either, except to try to gain some perspective so we can see them for what they are.

Will I get in trouble for observing that gay men are among the most stressed people in America about making sure they have the perfect holiday dinner, the perfect place setting, the perfect … well, you get the picture. I have been in homes that set such high standards that I left feeling like a complete loser.

And as for getting the perfect gift, I'll just say this. The worst thing you can hear is "Nice. What else did you get me?" Perhaps I'm just expressing a personal problem here, so I'll just move on now.

In spite of such challenges, the holiday season is a fine time of the year and well worth all this stress. Still, this year I plan lower my own stress level and refrain from taking the holidays too seriously. How about you?

Trum Simmons is senior professor of English at Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC) and adviser of The Fourth Estate, the Harrisburg campus student newspaper. He also advises HACC Allies, the LGBTQA student organization.

Sen. Casey Urged to Support Overturn of Defense of Marriage Act

Following the successful campaign in Maryland last month by Freedom to Marry, Courage Campaign and Equality Maryland to get Senator Barbara Mikulski to support the Respect for Marriage Act, Equality Pennsylvania, Freedom to Marry and the Courage Campaign announced a joint campaign urging Senator Robert Casey to sign on as a cosponsor of the Respect for Marriage Act, the bill that will overturn the so-called Defense of Marriage Act.

The effort took place in early October.

"Over the years, Senator Casey has shown true growth in his understanding and support of LGBT issues and for that Equality Pennsylvania is grateful," said Ted Martin, executive director, Equality Pennsylvania.

"Supporting the repeal of the discriminatory and mean-spirited so-called Defense of Marriage Act is yet another large step in this progress and we are happy to join with Freedom to Marry and the Courage Campaign to give voice to the just and equal treatment thousands of LGBT citizens and their allies believe and have called for publicly in letters, conversations and recently quite a number of polls. Supporting repeal is the right choice for the Senator."

"Loving and committed couples across Pennsylvania and the nation are harmed every day by DOMA," said Marc Solomon, National Campaign Director of Freedom to Marry, the campaign to win marriage nationwide. "We are working with our partners at Equality Pennsylvania and Courage Campaign to make sure that Senator Casey hears from his constituents who want him to join in support of the Respect for Marriage Act."

The three groups will collect signatures from a variety of constituents across Pennsylvania. Currently, Pennsylvania excludes same-sex couples from marriage, but many same-sex couples have married in other states and are harmed by federal marriage discrimination under DOMA.

"I have known Senator Casey for six years and I respect him greatly," said Rick Jacobs, chair and founder of the Courage Campaign, a 700,000 member national, grassroots, progressive online organization. "He is thoughtful, deliberate and he always bends towards justice. Gay and lesbian couples are a part of Pennsylvania and their love is equal to every other Pennsylvanian."

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Teachers Return from Study Tour

Turkish Cultural Foundation

By Frank Pizzoli

In World War II, Turkey fought on the side of the US Allies and a result became a charter member of the United Nations.

More recently, the friendliness of Turkey towards the US has declined markedly over the past five years. The decline is primarily a result of the US instigation of the Iraq War.

Turkey views the Iraq war as a significant threat because northern Iraq acts as a safe-haven for a Kurdish guerrilla group, the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). Therefore, Turkey views the destabilization of Iraq as a possible impetus for Kurds to claim their independence from Turkey, Iraq, and/or other Middle Eastern countries with significant Kurdish populations.

That's the news cycle version of Turkey but what about the simple human side of the equation?

Enter the World Affairs Council of Harrisburg and its affiliation with the Turkish Cultural Foundation that sent John Harris High School teachers Cynthia Hartman, a social science teacher, and librarian Mark Hafer, on a two week studying tour of Turkey.

Following a one-day preparation on Turkish culture, Hartman and Hafer joined 30 educators who also participated in the tour.

"We started out in Istanbul," Hartman said, describing the country as more of a secular nation with a majority of people practicing the Muslim faith. "The Muslim aspects of the country are less obvious than perhaps in other nations," Hartman said. She observed few Burkas and formal calls to prayer were made and "those who prayed did so in and around other citizens who did not" Hartman explained. Individual decisions about faith seemed to be honored.

"The contrast between modernization and older customs helps explain why maybe the US has such a close but at times volatile relationship with Turkey," Hartman said. In major areas, Turkish citizens are part of the grid, using cell phones, laptops, and other electronic devices.

In contrast to modern devices, Hafer found that he was a hit with something as human as doing "burpees" with students. People are people he insists, adding "I'll travel to any part of the world." So will Hartman who has lived overseas twice, once in the Czech Republic and once in Guatemala. She's also visited Belize, Honduras, El Salvador, Mexico, Ireland, England, France, Spain, Germany, Poland, Slovakia, Austria, Hungary, Israel, and China. "This was my first visit to Turkey," Hartman said, adding that her father lived in Turkey in the 1960's and she grew up hearing about the country.

Based on his Turkish adventure, Hartman will be using library resources to enhance social science lessons. "He's already been in my classroom," Hartman said, sharing with students his impressions.

Hartman is currently teaching a course titled, "United States in a Global Society," covering issues such as foreign aid, terrorism, world economy, and human rights. "As I was teaching this course I discovered I had a strong pulse on the political atmosphere of Latin America and Europe, but not on the Middle East. Although part of Turkey is, geographically, in Europe, and in many ways Turkey is very European, Turkey is a strong democratic force in the Middle East," Hartman said.

Students learn that the world is not a monolith of belief systems. There is diversity within diversity.

To more deeply understand the Turkey, Hafer and Hartman, along with other teachers, met with fellow teachers and students, learning about the Turkish educational system at various schools including Darussafaka, a school for orphaned children; the Besiktas Anatolian school; and the Atakoy Ilkogretim Okulu in the Turkish village of Karacasu. This last school has been adopted and is being supported by American teachers from previous Study Tours.

Hartman

Hafer

Other locations visited included famous historical sites such as the St. Sophia, the Spice Bazaar, Topkapi Palace and the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, which holds over a million artifacts representing the span of world history.

Speaking of history, what about President Obama?

"High awareness of Obama among the Turkish people. No real negatives on him that we heard," Hartman observed.

Hartman's students will benefit from her tour because of the knowledge she has gained Hartman said. "For example, I now know that many Turks do not want Turkey to join the EU, mainly because Turkey's GDP is much higher that than of European countries," she explained.

"Many of my students have a very negative attitude of Muslims and as many people in Turkey are Muslims I will be able to help dispel some of those stereotypes. In addition, I have many contacts at several Turkish public schools; it may be possible to connect my students with students in Turkey," Hartman said.

By the end of the 2011 Teacher Study Tour currently underway, TCF will have introduced 348 American educators to the history, culture and landmarks of Turkey since 2007. No taxpayer money was spent on the trip. Each teacher paid $600 out of their own pocket.

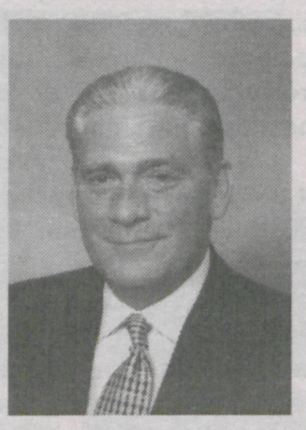
Township Protection Ordinance

cont'd from page 1

Cost?

Will the protections add to the cost of government? That argument was used in the recent, contentious debate in Lancaster County when commissions there eventually scrubbed from their budget the county-based panel that heard complaints now referred to the state human relations commission.

"No, we're relying on volunteers to craft the language and to hear complaints if they arise," Bowman explained.



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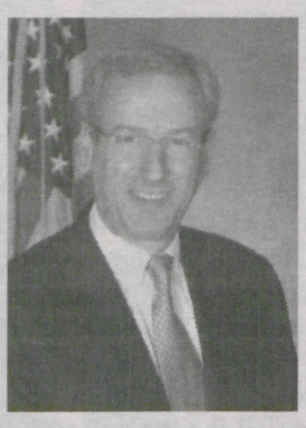

Frankel

Floyd

The ordinance planned for the township will use the state Human Relations Act language as a start and then add the intended categories. "If a complaint comes under our local language that protects sexual orientation, we'll provide the review process here on a local level," she said. Discrimination claims made within the current language of the state law will be referred the state commission.

In his initial presentation to commissioners, Dorko proposed that in an era of fiscal restraint, "the ordinance can be implemented with close to zero cost" relying on volunteers. Such a panel would be eligible to receive free training from the state commission. His measure, Dorko said, "should not include private clubs or organizations that do not accept public funds."

Next steps

Bowman has appointed 13 individuals, a mix of officials and residents, to come up with ordinance language. In addition to Dorko and Bowman, they are Eva O'Diam, Daphne Champagne, Fred Engle, Homer Floyd, Jeff Champagne, Lori Serratelli, Mel Johnson, Mona Johnson, Nancy Gippert, and Ray Landis. Floyd is former executive director of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission (PHRC) and Gippert has served as an attorney with the agency.

"Because of my experience I can share the rationale for ordinance language," Floyd said.

He also brings administrative savvy and hopes to indicate a path the committee might follow as procedures are developed.

Asked if he's going to serve on the volunteer local committee that will eventually listen to local complaints, Floyd said "That's premature."

Next steps in the process include formal advertising of the ordinance, a public hearing and a possible final vote by December, Bowman said. "Absolutely I support the ordinance," she told Central Voice, adding "our state legislature isn't putting these protections into place."

transgender column

By Jeanine Ruhsam
President, TransCentralPA
Co-Chair, the Keystone Conference

Left Standing Alone

Recently while I was packing my bag to fly the next day to Atlanta for the Southern Comfort Conference - the world's largest gender conference - my gay and lesbian friends were celebrating in Harrisburg and at many venues across America. The good cause for their high spirits was the demise of "Don't Ask Don't Tell", that day being the first ever that gay Americans could openly serve in the US Military. I received an invitation from my friends at Equality PA to join a celebration in our capitol city, but I'll admit that the real reason I didn't attend wasn't because I needed to pack my bag. I felt left out and even marginalized, for we trans people are not included in the DADT repeal.

Two nights later I sat with eight hundred other transgender people for dinner at a hotel in Atlanta. When the MC asked for all trans veterans to stand, over 160 people rose. Tears came to my eyes - not because of their service, but for the amazing sacrifice they all had made to serve. You see, transgender people still cannot be out in America's military. Though our allies Canada, Israel, Australia and Spain all welcome openly transgender soldiers to their ranks, we - the nation called "the leader of the free world" - do not.

Why is this so? The answer comes readily: because, according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) - the "bible" of American Psychiatry - transgender people are diagnosed with Gender Identity Disorder, and thus are deemed mentally ill. Obviously mentally ill people cannot serve in the military…and, unfortunately, this argument is used to deny transgender Americans many other basic civil rights and to allow and even condone open discrimination against us.

The good news is that progress is being made. As the conference in Atlanta I attended closed last Sunday, another opened a few blocks away- the biennial meeting of WPATH, the World Professional Association for Transgender Health. Foremost among the highlights of their Standards of Care (SOC) version 7 released that day was a strong recommendation to the American Psychiatric Association (APA)- who are in the process of revising the DSM- to remove Gender Identity Disorder (GID) from the DSM. The committee of doctors and caregivers that make up WPATH urge the APA to understand that "the expression of gender characteristics, including identities that are not stereotypically associated with one's assigned sex at birth is a common and culturally-diverse human phenomenon [that] should not be judged as inherently pathological or negative."

Many other prominent physicians, psychiatrists and scientists are and have been working diligently and empirically to achieve the removal of GID from the DSM. In the end, once we have convinced the APA that we transgender people are not disordered, but simply part of natural diversity and the diagnosis of GID is struck from the DSM, we will be where gay and lesbian people were in 1973: no longer declared mentally ill. It is daunting to note that it has taken nearly forty years for gays and lesbians to achieve the ability to serve openly in our military once they became judged sound of mind…must we trans people wait that long?

Ned Smith Center Activities

Popcorn Hat Players presents Sleeping Beauty!
Saturday, November 12, 2011; 10 a.m.

Central PA's favorite Children's Theatre will present their wacky take on the classic tale, "Sleeping Beauty." Join the bumbling and fumbling Narrator-Turned-Prince, as he tries his best to rise to heroic heights to save the Princess and the sleeping village caught in the spell cast by Fairy Sour Puss! Modern word play and audience participation make this story a sure hit with the entire kingdom.

LOCATION: Millersburg Senior Center, 109 Edward Road, Millersburg
ADMISSION: $6, "Family 4-pack" $20
Sponsored by M&T Bank

Ned Smith Night at Pennsylvania Regional Ballet's The Nutcracker
Saturday, December 4, 2010, 7:30 p.m.

Enjoy this holiday classic, presented by the Ned Smith Center's Resident Ballet Company, Pennsylvania Regional Ballet.

LOCATION: Scottish Rite Cathedral, 2701 N. 3rd St., Harrisburg
ADMISSION: Call 717-732-1974 for tickets

arts & entertainment

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Me and My Girl
Through Nov. 12
The truly charming musical that spreads joy, laughter and romance. The story of working - class Bill Snibson who is astounded when he inherits the title of earl and all its fortunes. He clashes with his snooty blue-bloods relatives, all the while remaining true to his beloved girl, Sally. It will have you dancing in the aisles to The Lambeth Walk, the wildly contagious One You Lose Your Heart, Love Makes the World Go Round, Leaning On A Lamppost. Will Bill get the loot? Will he give up his girl? Will the snooty blue-bloods let their hair down? It'll take your heart away.

Miracle on 34th Street
Nov. 17 – Dec. 23

Kris Kringle takes on the cynics among us in this musical adaptation of the popular holiday movie. A white-bearded gentleman claiming to be the real Santa Claus brings about a genuine miracle, spreading a wave of love throughout New York City, fostering camaraderie between Macy's and Gimbel's Department Stores, and convincing a cynical single mother, her curious daughter and the entire state of New York that Santa Claus and true happiness is no myth.
Tickets: 717.898.1900

Seussical the Musical
DEC. 2- 31, 2011
10:30 Lunch 11:30 Show
December 2, 6, 9, 13, 16, 20, 23
11:45 Lunch 12:45 Show
December 4, 10, 11, 17, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31
December 27, 28
5:30 Dinner 6:30 Show

A fantastical, magical, musical extravaganza! Your favorite Dr. Seuss characters all come to life including The Cat in the Hat, Horton the Elephant, Gertrude McFuzz, Lazy Mayzie and a little boy with a big imagination--Jojo. "Oh, the Thinks You Will Think" as the spirit of imagination transports the colorful characters from the Jungle of Nool to the Circus McGurkus to the invisible world of the Whos.
Tickets: 717.898.1900

STRAND CAPITAL

The Smithereens
Nov. 13, 7:30 p.m.
Tickets: $22, $31, $35
An XPN Welcomes event.

River City Brass/Honors Choir
Dec. 17, 3 p.m.

Strand Theatre
Tickets: $18, $33, $39
Join Pittsburgh's renowned 28-piece ensemble and special guests the York County Senior Honors Choir in a concert of seasonal favorites! Made up of 120 York County students, grades 10 - 12, the York County Senior Honors Choir has a mission of celebrating the county's rich diversity through the voices of youth.

HERSHEY THEATRE

Dec. 4, 3 p.m.
Hershey Community Chorus
"A Pennsylvania Christmas 2011"
"A Pennsylvania Christmas 2011" will feature the very talented New Horizon Singers from Milton Hershey School as well as soloists James Longacre and his wife Dorothy Cardella, both voice instructors at the Milton Hershey School, at the performance in The Hershey Theatre.

Tickets: $15 - General
$8 - Children ages 5 - 12
FREE - Children under age 5
$14 - Groups of 20+
717-534-3405
1-800-745-3000
HersheyTheatre.com.

"Funny Girl" Classic Film at Hershey Theatre
Dec. 11, 2 p.m.

Funny Girl marked the film debut of Barbra Streisand as she reprised her Broadway role as Ziegfeld star Fanny Brice. Omar Sharif stars as her first husband, gambler Nick Arnstein. William Wyler directed the film, which was nominated for eight Academy Awards, including Best Picture. Streisand won the Oscar for Best Actress, in a tie with Katharine Hepburn. The classic songs "People" and "Don't Rain on My Parade" are featured.
Tickets: $7 each or six-packs of tickets for $30
717-534-3405
1-800-745-3000
HersheyTheatre.com.

WHITAKER CENTER

Sunoco Performance Theater
A Christmas Story
Nov. 4, 11 & 18 - 8pm
Nov. 5 & 19 - 4pm
Nov. 6, 13 & 20 - 2pm
Nov. 12 - 8pm
Nov. 17 - 7:30pm

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George Balanchine's
The NutcrackerTM
Sunoco Performance Theater
Presented by Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet
Dec. 10, 1pm & 5pm
Dec. 11, 2pm

Ticket prices vary
717-214-ARTS (2787)
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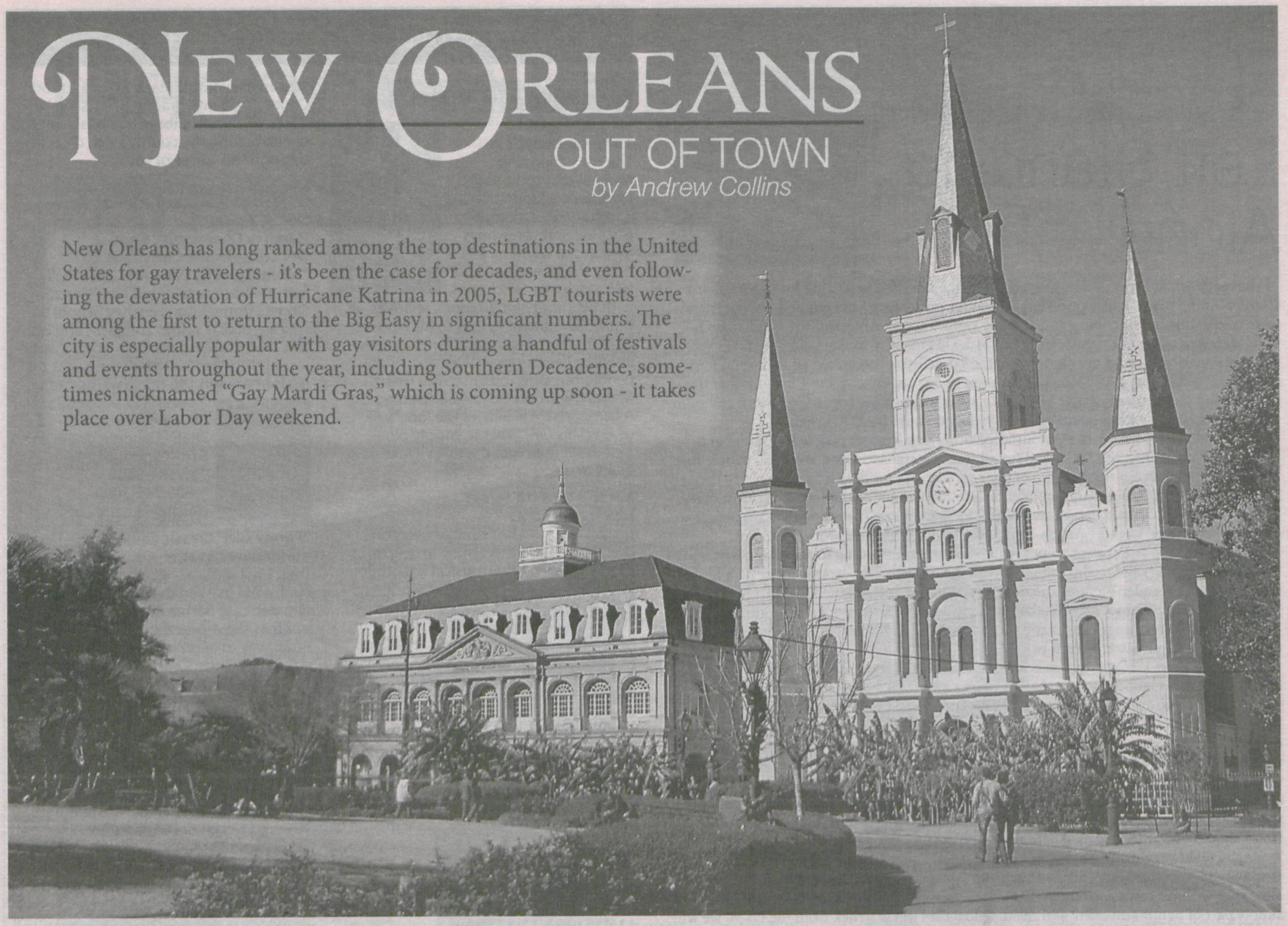
New Orleans

OUT OF TOWN

by Andrew Collins

New Orleans has long ranked among the top destinations in the United States for gay travelers - it's been the case for decades, and even following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, LGBT tourists were among the first to return to the Big Easy in significant numbers. The city is especially popular with gay visitors during a handful of festivals and events throughout the year, including Southern Decadence, sometimes nicknamed "Gay Mardi Gras," which is coming up soon - it takes place over Labor Day weekend.



Jackson Square lies at the heart of New Orleans' vibrant French Quarter. *Photo by Andrew Collins*

Other key events for gay visitors are Halloween weekend at the end of October, New Orleans Gay Pride in late June, and - of course - the city's true Mardi Gras season, which takes place at varying times in late winter (in 2012, the date of Mardi Gras "Fat" Tuesday is February 21. Additionally, Christmas season - throughout December and right into New Year - is a wonderful time to visit, in part because of the mild weather but also because it's a season of very lively parties and special dinners held by numerous restaurants (called reveillon dinners).

Whenever you happen to make your way to this festive city, which has staged a remarkable renaissance since Katrina, you'll find no shortage of fascinating neighborhoods.

First, a word about navigation: the layout of New Orleans is tricky for newcomers. Locals don't use such directional cues as "east," "west," "south," and "north," so leave your compass at home. The city is sandwiched between Lake Pontchartrain and the Mississippi River, which snakes around the parts of the city with the bulk of the key neighborhoods - hence the nickname, the "Crescent City." So listen instead for directional references to the lake, the river, or a particular neighborhood.

If you're interesting in finding names of the many cool gay bars, desirable restaurants, and intriguing shops in New Orleans, consider such resources as the city tourism office's official LGBT visitor website (www.neworleansonline.com/neworleans/glbt), and commercial sites like GayNewOrleans.com and AmbushMag.com are also very handy.

Some of the nation's finest examples of late-18th- and 19th-century residential architecture line the streets of the French Quarter, which fringes the river. The Quarter may be the only major entertainment district in America that's frequented just about equally by gays and straights, locals and tourists. Virtually every notable restaurant in the French Quarter (a.k.a. Vieux Carre, which residents pronounce voo-cair-ay) has at least something of a gay following, and you'll find a mixed gay-straight crowd at many bars and hangouts, and the epicenter of the city's gay nightlife scene at the intersection of Bourbon and St. Ann streets (home to venerable bars like Bourbon Pub and Oz). The neighborhood also abounds with hotels and inns with a strong gay following.

Bourbon Street is the Quarter's most famous address, but Decatur Street is a better walking thoroughfare - it's less chaotic and commercial and more diverse, home to good, cheap eateries and offbeat shops. Off Decatur is the entrance to Jackson Square, the historic center of the French Quarter. Behind the gloriously landscaped square is the stunning late-18th-century St. Louis Cathedral. William Faulkner once resided at 624 Pirate's Alley, which is one of two alleys (Pere Antoine is the other) that cut beside the cathedral between Chartres (pronounced "Charters") and Royal streets. At 632 St. Peter Street is the house (now private) in which Tennessee Williams lived when he penned A Streetcar Named Desire.

Many antiques shops and galleries are along Chartres and Royal streets, as well as in the wonderfully atmospheric French Market, where you can buy everything from local crafts to regional culinary specialties - hot sauces, bits of alligator jerky, gumbo mixes, and so on. Across from the entrance to Jackson Square are steps leading to the Mississippi River and Woldenberg Riverfront Park, which is a relaxing place to explore day or night. The park leads to the Audubon Aquarium of the Americas, a state-of-the-art facility where marinelife swim in dozens of exhibits.

The neighborhood just downriver from the Quarter - across tree-shaded Esplanade Avenue - is Faubourg Marigny, sometimes lovingly dubbed "Fagburg" Marigny for its sizable GLBT presence. Nearer the Quarter, from about Elysian Fields Avenue to Esplanade, more rainbow flags fly than anywhere else in the city. The next neighborhood downriver, Bywater, has been significantly gentrified in recent years by a newer wave of settlers, many of them gay, who have restored dozens of grand old homes.

The more modern side of New Orleans falls within the Central Business District (CBD), which borders the Canal Street side of the Quarter. There are some prime examples of early 20th-century commercial architecture in and around where Perdido Street intersects with Loyola Avenue, but this district looks like a typical American downtown business section. Toward the river, however, particularly along Julia Street, you'll find the increasingly interesting Warehouse District, which abounds with galleries, restaurants, and some notable museums, including the Ogden Museum of Southern Art and the National World War II Museum.

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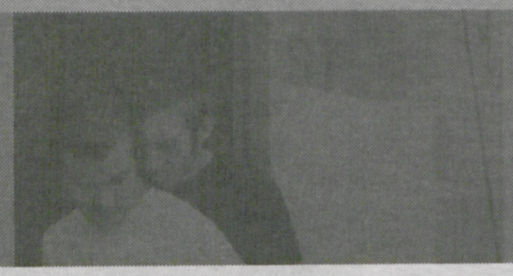

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Out of Town continued from page 24

From Canal Street, you can take the streetcar along St. Charles Avenue for several miles clear out to Carrollton Avenue. This trip takes in the city's vibrant Uptown and Carrollton neighborhoods and reveals dozens of historic homes (some open as museums), churches, and trendy dining and shopping districts. Such attractions as Audubon Park and Zoo, Loyola and Tulane universities, and the courtly Garden District round out this part of town. To see the homes and gardens that give the Garden District its name and allure, alight at the Washington Avenue stop and walk a block down Washington to Prytania Street.

Much of the best shopping and dining Uptown is along Magazine Street, which parallels St. Charles a few blocks closer to the river and is especially known for its antiques stores and galleries. A walk along this engaging street reveals a side of city that's far less touristy than the French Quarter.

Where to Stay in New Orleans

Although the usual chain properties are well-represented all over the city, and some of these make excellent lodging options, New Orleans also has an exceptionally high number of guesthouses and inns set inside vintage mansions as well as larger historic hotels. In terms of history and atmosphere, the Hotel Monteleone (hotelmonteleone.com) - once a favorite overnight address of Truman Capote, Tennesee Williams, and many other literary greats - is a stand-out. More than 125 years old, the 600-room high rise is in the heart of the French Quarter, has a great spa and a fabulous bar, the Carousel Piano Lounge.

Of larger properties, other great choices are the swanky Ritz-Carlton New Orleans (www.ritzcarlton.com), which fringes the Quarter and occupies a historic former department store; Harrah's New Orleans (www.harrahsneworleans.com), which is centrally located, is home to several excellent restaurants, and has beautiful rooms - the casino is in a completely separate building, making it ideal whether or not you're into gaming. Also check out the New Orleans Marriott (www.marriott.com), which draws a mix of business and leisure travelers, borders the Quarter, and offers a GLBT-oriented "Rainbow NOLA Getaway" package.

If you're more interested in a smaller property, be sure to check out the website of Bed and Breakfast Inns of New Orleans (www.bbnola.com), which lists nearly 50 reliable properties throughout the city - you can search for them on the site by checking a number of criteria, including "gay-friendly." Some favorites include La Maison Marigny B&B (www.lamaisonmarigny.com), which is right on Bourbon Street (the quiet end), just a few blocks from numerous bars, and has smartly furnished, eco-friendly rooms; and 1896 O'Malley House (www.1896omalleyhouse.com), a gorgeous Colonial Revival home in the Mid-City neighborhood (an easy streetcar ride from the Quarter), with lavishly furnished rooms and spectacular breakfasts.

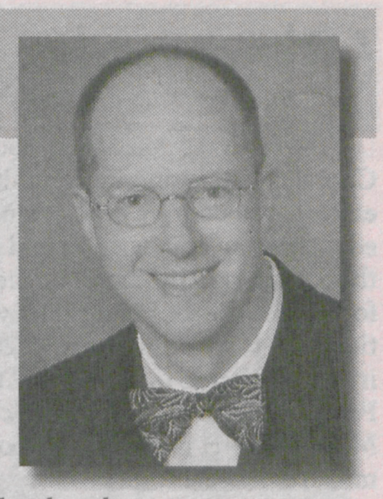
B&W Courtyards (www.bandwcourtyards.com), in Faubourg Marigny just a short walk from Frenchmen Street's dining and nightlife, is another terrific inn, with intimate and elegant rooms and knowledgeable hosts who know a ton about the neighborhood. And if you're seeking a distinctive accommodation Uptown, near the Garden District, consider the Chimes B&B (www.chimesneworleans.com), whose five guest rooms are posh but understated, some with original fireplaces, slate floor or heart-of-pine floors, and pitched ceilings. It's one of the most romantic places to stay in New Orleans.

Andrew Collins covers gay travel for the New York Times-owned website GayTravel, About.com and is the author of Fodor's Gay Guide to the USA.

legal column

By Leo Dunn, Attorney at Law

Health Care Directives



A health care directive is Pennsylvania's official name for a power of attorney directed solely at making health care decisions in the event of incapacitation whether from accident or illness. A good health care directive under state law has three parts, a great one has four.

The first part is general directions for making health decisions in the event a person is not able to communicate instructions – such as being unconscious after an auto accident – but is expected to be able to recover from whatever is wrong. This part of the directive makes sure that decisions can be made timely and without (much) argumentation over who should be making decisions for the patient. It should also include a clause giving the health care agent the power to determine who is to be admitted to a hospital or care facility room.

The second part of the typical health care directive is instructions regarding what should happen if the patient is in an "end stage medical condition," cannot communicate their wishes – such as being in a severe coma and having stage four cancer – and is not expected to live without mechanical help. This is the part often referred to as a "living will." It gives instructions as to what procedures should or shouldn't be attempted and states the patient's wishes.

The third part of a health care directive is simply the part naming who the primary health care agent is entrusted with making decisions for the patient. It should also list a first and second alternate in case the first choice is unavailable or has passed away.

The fourth part of a good directive is not required by Pennsylvania law, but is the logical conclusion to a good health care directive. It's a disposition of remains provision. Some attorneys like to have these as separate documents, but I subscribe to the theory that all health care related decisions should be covered in one document. Thus, if you go into the hospital due to an auto accident as an otherwise healthy individual the first part governs. If while you are there you get infected with a virulent bacteria and slip into an end stage medical condition, part two governs. And if you subsequently die, part four comes into play.

The disposition of remains provision says who to control disposing of your body and how it is to be done. This part can be very simple or very detailed. It can simply say the health care agent is to take control and make all arrangements as they see fit or it can state specifically what mortuary company is to do preparations, what should happen, what type of services if any, if your ashes should be scattered in a particular place, etc. – even down to what songs are to be played at your memorial service.

Having a good health care directive with a remains provision makes everything flow smoothly and relieves partners and family members of the responsibility of trying to decide what you would have like to happen.

Personally, I think this is the most important planning document a person can have. Everyone over 18 should have one even if they have no assets. Wills and powers of attorneys can wait but a health care directive should be done as soon as possible if you don't have one.

Leo Dunn is an attorney and counselor-at-law practicing in Harrisburg with a focus on the estate planning needs of the GLBT community. He may be reached at leo@leodunnlaw.com

Susquehanna Chorale Offers 11 Season Performances

Central Pennsylvania's nationally renowned Susquehanna Chorale, directed by Linda L. Tedford, the ensemble's founder and artistic director, celebrates its 30th anniversary with performances scheduled through May.

With its award-winning choral artistry and stage presence, the Chorale will offer its signature blend of polished performance, varied repertoire, and educational outreach, anticipated each year by audiences and collaborating artists.

The Chorale's season for November includes the Youth Choral Festival, Sunday, Nov. 20, 4 p.m., at the Lower Dauphin High School in Hummelstown, where the ensemble will share the stage for an intergenerational concert with the Susquehanna Children's Chorale, Susquehanna Young Women's Chorale and Susquehanna Youth Chorale.

continued on page 30

Chorale continued on from page 29

The festival celebrates the Susquehanna Chorale's long-standing commitment to extend to upcoming generations, through education, an appreciation and passion for the highest quality choral music and performance. The four ensembles will conclude the concert with an inspiring, 200-voice interpretation of the famous "Anthem of Peace," arranged by American composer Mack Wilberg, music director of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

Offering a mixture of sacred selections and carols for the holiday season, the Chorale presents three performances of "A Candlelight Christmas" on Friday, Dec. 16, 8 p.m., at Leffler Chapel and Performance Center in Elizabethtown; Saturday, Dec. 17, 8 p.m., at Market Square Presbyterian Church in Harrisburg; and Sunday, Dec. 18, 4 p.m., at Trinity Lutheran Church in Camp Hill. A new CD of this Christmas concert's repertoire, due for release this fall, will be available at both performances. In addition to the CD repertoire, the concert program includes a premiere performance of the newly commissioned "Star in the East" by Richard Roberson, dean of Messiah College's School of the Arts, as well as a guest performance by the Susquehanna Children's Chorale.

As the culmination of its 30th-anniversary season, the Chorale presents two performances of its spring concert, "A Celebration of Song," on Saturday, May 19, 2012, 7 p.m., at Market Square Presbyterian Church in Harrisburg and on Sunday, May 20, 2012, 4 p.m., at Derry Presbyterian Church in Hershey. Designed as a celebration of the choral art and the Chorale's three-decades of performances, the Susquehanna Chorale, 2011-2012 concert offers old and new choral classics, from the sublime to the rollicking. The program includes John Rutter's "Wells Jubilate," Benjamin Britten's "Festival Te Deum," Eric Whitacre's "Cloudburst" with percussive effects, spirituals and folk songs, and Christopher Tin's "Baba Yetu," a setting of Psalm 23 to music from a video game.

Tickets: 717- 691-6036

LGBT community center coalition

By Louie Marven
Director of Education & Youth Services
LGBT Community Center Coalition of Central PA

Reflections on 2011

In reflecting on the past year at the center, I am encouraged by the exceptional programmatic growth we've experienced. New initiatives, expanded services, and creative partnerships have characterized 2011 at the center.

Aging

The center launched new programs, including the Central PA LGBT Aging Network (CPLAN). CPLAN has held a Friends and Family Brunch for LGBT older adults, brought the documentary film Gen Silent to various locations across the region, and begun the work of educating care providers about the needs and experiences of LGBT older adults.

On Nov. 10 at 11 a.m., CPLAN will honor LGBT veterans at Soldier's Grove behind the Capitol Building in Harrisburg. Stay tuned for more activities from this burgeoning program.

Carlisle chapter

Our youth program Common Roads expanded services this year with the opening of a chapter in Carlisle. Activities for LGBTQ youth ages 14-22 have begun taking place every Thursday from 6:00—8:00 pm at the Carlisle Hatha Yoga Studio. This exciting development means that we are operating three weekly meeting spaces for LGBTQ youth in central Pennsylvania; groups also meet in Harrisburg and Lancaster on Fridays from 7:00—9:30 pm. Through the first three quarters of the year, over 100 unduplicated youth have attended a weekly "safe space" meeting.

Young leaders

Common Roads also continues to develop young leaders through its support of local gay-straight alliance (GSA's), culminating in an annual leadership summit. Since the 2011 exceeded its capacity by 20%, the fifth annual summit in 2012 will expand to two days for the first time. Year-round, we provide training for professional staff working with young people to ensure their competency in supporting LGBTQ youth. In settings ranging from colleges to high schools to social service agencies, we have trained over 400 professionals in 2011 to create safe spaces for LGBTQ youth in our region.

Arts

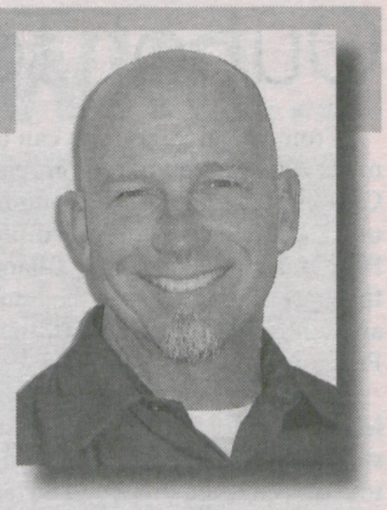
An addition to our series of arts and culture initiatives, OUT@OPEN STAGE started this fall. OUT@OPEN STAGE offers the chance for LGBT theater-goers and friends to subscribe for a discounted rate to Open Stage of Harrisburg's 2011-2012, support the Center in the process, and get to know other subscribers at a social hour after the shows at Carley's Piano Bar & Ristorante. The Center hosted local author Glen Retief for a reading and signing of his novel The Jack Bank, and local theatrical performance activist Peterson Toscano for a night with the hilarious and dynamic characters of Doin' Time with Peterson Toscano. A book club meeting on the third Sundays of the month from 5:00—7:00 pm at the Midtown Scholar Bookstore continues to thrive.

Thanks to the dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers who made all of this work possible in 2011! We look forward to continued growth in 2012.

Info: New-look website www.centralpalgbtcenter.org.

making sense of life

By Dr. Terry Drew Karanen



Choose Your Holidays

Greetings! This new column is designed to look at the spiritual side of the problems shared by people of all sexual orientations. Read "spiritual", not "religious." My mission is to help other people have a life worth living. The motto of my center is "We make sense of life." We do this together by integrating spirituality, psychology, metaphysics and common sense into a philosophy called "The Science of Mind."

There is something extremely powerful about making choices in our life. Not choosing is still choosing. When we refuse to make a decision we have chosen to take what we get. The upcoming holidays can be joyful or unpleasant largely based on the choices we make.

Choice is not something that comes to mind with the holiday season for some people.

Do you feel obligated to travel across the country to be with people you cannot stand? Are you and your partner still having separate holidays, because one or both of your families do not accept your relationship? Why?

Perhaps pure guilt is the driving force. Maybe on some unconscious level you still need to feel like the rebel child, which reinforces the belief that "mom always liked him better than me." Neither reason makes much sense to me if it means you are going to spend hundreds of dollars in travel expenses to be miserable.

On the other hand, it could be that you love your family, even with all their warts of bigotry, and you and your partner have decided that with 364 other days of love to share you can be apart for one holiday out of the year.

Either of these scenarios is possible, but wherever you go, with whomever you choose to be with for the holidays let that be a choice, not an obligation. However, when we choose to be somewhere we do not wish to be (either for the holidays or any other time) then we really cannot complain that we are the victim of our circumstances.

Once you make a choice you move from victim to volunteer. Choosing one path over another is also the difference between being a volunteer for life as opposed to being a victim in life. There is a total lack of empowerment when we are victimized. But there is a completely different energy that is created when we place ourselves in a position that allows us to be victimized. A foundation of strength is created when we take a deep breath and then make a clear and conscious decision about doing or not doing what is expected of us.

We may dread attending a family gathering with a sibling who is diametrically opposed to our sexual orientation, political views and spiritual beliefs. But choosing to go there places us there as an empowered individual, not a victim of circumstance. It also means that if we choose to attend we can also choose to leave.

All the winter holidays are seasons of light. Be willing this year to "lighten up" your world. Release the burdens of guilt and obligation during the coming weeks to joyfully create the holidays you truly want. Bring the light of Truth into your life by being willing to be honest to yourself and others. One of my teachers believed that true prosperity begins when we allow ourselves to do what you want with the people you want to be with. It is great advice for the holiday. It is not a bad idea for the rest of the year either!

Contact: terry@newthoughtpa.org or www.newthoughtpa.org

Dr. Terry is a licensed social worker in clinical practice and the only ordained minister in our area teaching the Science of Mind philosophy. His practice provides a safe, diverse and welcoming atmosphere for people of all backgrounds, cultures, sexual orientations, gender identification and ages.

Totem Pole Playhouse Raises $6,000 for Retired Nuns

Actress Kim Richards has had a good run being a nun, having played the character of Sister in the Late Nite Catechism series for the years. So it's only fitting that she gives a little back, with the help of her audiences.

At a sold out performance at Totem Pole Playhouse, Richards would pass the metaphorical collection plate every night, asking theatergoers to contribute a little for the retired nuns of the Sisters of Saints Cyril and Methodius of Danville, PA. During the comedy, in which Richards plays a stern nun running a lesson on Catholic sacraments, latecomers and cut-ups would be fined a dollar each - and the fines all went to the fund as well.

Between the fines and the offerings for collection, Totem Pole audiences generously contributed $6,812.00 over the course of eight shows. Richards and Totem Pole Artistic Director Ray Ficca presented the donation to Sister Denise Fallet following the final performance.

"Seeing the look on Sister Denise's face was worth every effort that went into putting on this show," said Ficca. "And these nuns desperately need this money to care for the retired and elderly of their order."

Totem Pole Playhouse presents its 62 Season in May 2012. The Playhouse is one of the few remaining professional summer stock theatres in the country.

Katy B and Pistol Annies

By Chris Azzopardi

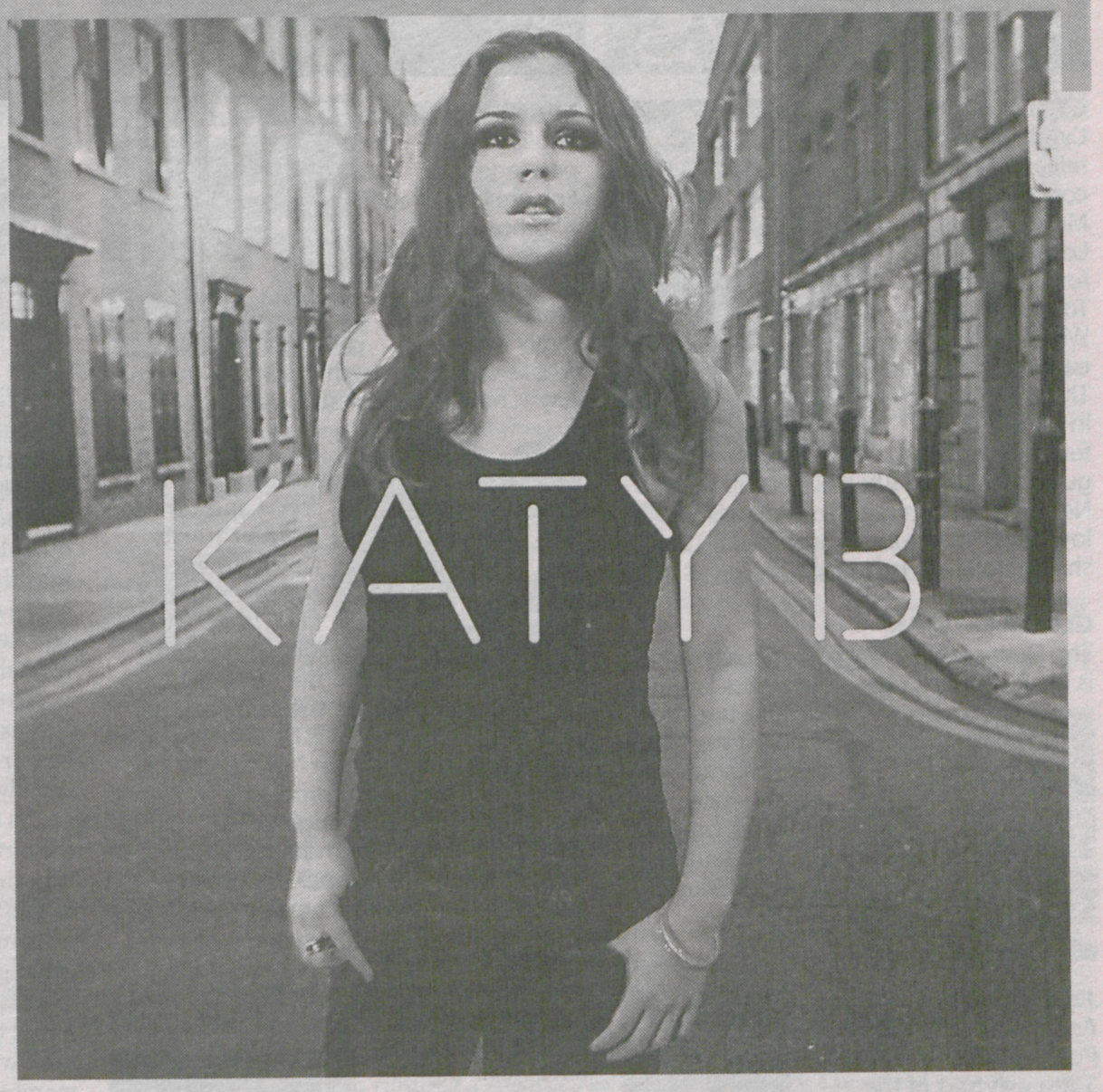
Katy B, "On a Mission"

They're everywhere – British songbirds trying to take over the world with their voices. But Katy B, who's already made major headway in her native country for her unique, mainstream-friendly blend of dubstep, house and soul, is a name that's destined to catch on.

The 22-year-old's debut is one of the best in recent years, a near-perfect spin that feels loose, gritty, mature and free from the strategic control of a record label (even though she's got major-label backing under Sony) – the antithesis of Jessie J's first effort, released just a few months ago.

"Power On Me," an old-school throwback to the '80s, sets the stage for a familiar sound that the London-based artist makes all her own, moving into the thumping chainsaw-ripping single "Katy On a Mission," breezing through the jazzy "Movement" and nagging on the pitiful pool of men during "Easy Please Me," a devilish rant that's incredibly addictive. "These days I can't find a man to please me," sasses the singer, who adopts the Lily Allen brand of mouth-offs. She does it again on the dubstep groove "Go Away," but this time drops into some R&B coolness on the chorus. "Broken Record" lurches into a sweetly sung rave, and "Hard to Get" wraps the set – strangely pairing cricket chirps and lounge-y keyboards for a killer chiller. Even the what-could-be-canned thank yous at the end of the track sound like nothing you've heard before.

Grade: A-



Pistol Annies, "Hell on Heels"

Miranda Lambert isn't someone that likes to be messed with, which the country superstar has made clear on three consistently solid solo CDs. Now she and her two accomplices, Ashley Monroe and Angaleena Presley, are "Hell on Heels", the kitschy and cautionary title of the girl group's first album that's reminiscent of what Dolly Parton did with Emmylou Harris and Linda Ronstadt for the legendary "Trio" album. But that was 1987. So on their laid-back, traditional-sounding venture, Pistol Annies play with a modern sensibility that allows them to riff on girls-behaving-badly with "Takin' Pills" and, at their campiest, greedy relatives fighting over their dead mother's belongings on "Family Feud."

It's this openness to busting genre limits that makes their debut such a delight, with Lambert getting feisty mad at her ex on "Trailer for Rent" and then all starry-eyed over "Boys from the South." "Lemon Drop" offers an adorably witty slant to an it-gets-better song, while "Beige" is the group at their most affecting, as they sing about a shotgun wedding. There are only 10 ditties – all of them simple, not-too-produced pieces – that stretch over a skimpy 30 minutes. But that's certainly enough time for them to give us some hell, and some heaven.

Grade: B+

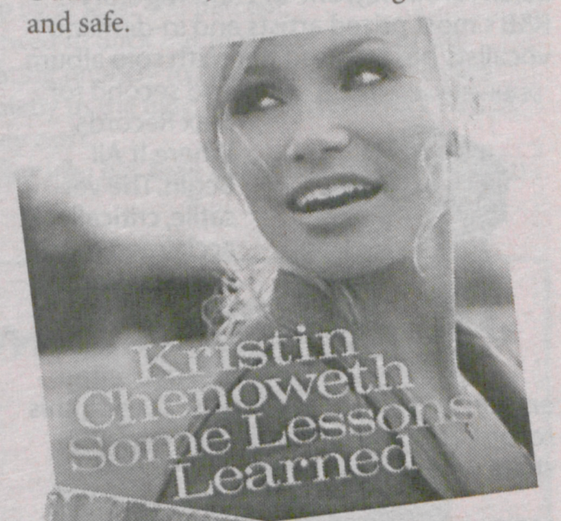
Also Out ...

Kristin Chenoweth, "Some Lessons Learned"

Just because Kristin Chenoweth is baby-cute doesn't mean she can get away with anything. And her crossover into country music, from Broadway and Christmas to nearly everything else, is the kind of near-miss that you wish wasn't. She's obviously a talented singer, and she nails a reading of Dolly Parton's "Change" (also great is her ode to the icon, "What Would Dolly Do?") and does a bang-up job on the clean-cut heartbreaker "Mine to Love" – but there's too much, to use Chenoweth's words, to bitch about. There's the way-too-wordy lead single "I Want Somebody (Bitch About)" and an overload of schmaltzy songs (blame Diane Warren). Just consider this another lesson learned.

Jon McLaughlin, "Forever If Ever"

We loved him as the hot ballroom balladeer who stole hearts during _Enchanted_. But don't stop swooning; his fourth album features "I'll Follow You," another solid slowie in the vein of "So Close." Much of the rest, though, is grounded in the John Mayer genre: "Promising Promises," opening with organ, is a falsetto showcase; "Summer is Over" is his best chance at a hit (even if it's not the best track), and "You are What I'm Here For" is a lovely song of desperation. The '80s influences of his last album no longer exist, instead gleaning inspiration from grunge-rock for "I Brought this on Myself" and neo-Hanson on "Without You Now." Outside of that, it's still McLaughlin – sweet and safe.



REVIEWS | DVDs CDs

CYNDI LAUPER

Cyndi Lauper released a live concert DVD To Memphis, With Love on Megaforce Records. To Memphis, With Love, taped earlier this year at The Warehouse in Memphis and featuring special guests including Allen Toussaint, Tracy Nelson and Jonny Lang, serves as Cyndi's love letter to the blues and the city that she has fallen in love with.

GLORIA ESTEFAN

The Queen of Latin Pop, Gloria Estefan is back with her 26th album, Miss Little Havana, the international star's first English language release since 2003's Unwrapped, and her debut for Universal Music Group.

JESSICA SUTTA

As a member of the Pussycat Dolls, Jessica Sutta was part of the most successful female dance music group of all time. Now, the talented singer/actress/dance music innovator goes solo. Jessica releases her Hollywood Records debut single "Show Me," available now. The track will also be included in the upcoming "Now 39!" compilation, out now, and featured in the ABC Family original movie "Teen Spirit".

LALAH HATHAWAY

Lalah Hathaway, one of contemporary R&B's most prized artists and in-demand vocalists has released her sixth solo album and second for Stax Records, Where It All Begin. The versatile, critically acclaimed musician, songwriter, vocalist and producer found creative regeneration and newfound energy making this record, an artistic re-birth she's eager to share with anyone willing to listen.

MEITAL DOHAN

Not since the invention of the Original Sin has Israel produced such a hot export. Born and raised in Israel, Meital Dohan (pronounced "Mey-tall") is no stranger to the spotlight as an award-winning actress in theater, film, and television, and the author of a number of successful plays and the book "Love and Other Bad Habits".

FRANKMUSIC

English synth-pop legends Erasure launched a Tomorrow's World tour in the U.S. with Frankmusik, the British remix master whose own full-length album Do It in the AM (Cherrytree/Interscope).

JO JO

JoJo will join Joe Jonas and Jay Sean on their 19-city North American concert tour this fall. The tour will kick off September 6th in JOJO's native town of Boston, the same day her new single "Disaster" will be available at all digital retailers. "Disaster," written by JoJo and Gino Barletta and produced by Mario Marchetti, is the first single off her highly anticipated third album Jumping Trains (Blackground-Interscope/Streamline) which will be released in early 2012.

NICOLE SCHERZINGER

Global superstar Nicole Scherzinger releases new single, "Don't Hold Your Breath," available via all digital partners now. The track is the second single from the former Pussycat Dolls lead singer's upcoming solo album Killer Love, which will be released by Interscope Records in November.

NEON HITCH

Neon Hitch's new EP, Bad Dog, is out now and features the album version of "Bad Dog," which was produced by legendary producer Benny Blanco (who has also produced hit songs for Ke$ha, Britney Spears, Wiz Khalifa and Katy Perry), as well as three remixes of the song from Discotech, Jason Nevins and DJ Chuckie. Out.com said that Neon could be "the next big thing in pop music. And with tracks like 'Bad Dog,' she's well on her way."

NO I.D.

English synth-pop legends Erasure will be launching the first leg of their Tomorrow's World tour in the U.S. on August 31st with Frankmusik, the British remix master whose own full-length album Do It in the AM (Cherrytree/Interscope) will be released on September 27th. Frankmusik also produced Erasure's October disc Tomorrow's World, the band's first album in four years, and Erasure's 14th studio set and first release since their remastered version of 1988's classic The Innocents was released in 2009.

MCC column

By Rev. Lori Rivera, Pastor
MCC of the Spirit

Here Comes the Holidays!

What's the toughest time of year for you? For me, it's the time from right before Thanksgiving until New Year's Day. And it's not because I don't like the holidays, it just becomes so unbelievably busy. At MCC of the Spirit we have our Annual Meeting the week before Thanksgiving. The meeting deals with all our major business needs. We elect new board members, vote on by-law changes and the next year budget, and deal with any other business matters. We get done with the meeting and then wham! Here's thanksgiving. Thanksgiving means that the Advent Season will be starting in just a few days. Advent is one of the busiest times of the year. Special festive elements are added to the worship services, holiday events are arranged, and Christmas concerts are planned, along with a special Christmas Eve Service.

Don't get me wrong, while there's a lot going on and plenty of work that goes with it (this is part of being a church pastor); this time of year is filled with wonder and joy. We hear from friends we might not have heard from in a while. We have social events that usually include beautiful decorations (the men make them and then tell the women who are on the ladders where to hang them) and special seasonal foods. We retell the story of the birth of Jesus the Christ. And if we are lucky enough to be around children, we get to experience their joy and awe in the wonder of the season and we see that light in their eyes as they open that special holiday gift.

Unfortunately for many in the LGBT community, this season is also tough due to being estranged from their biological family. Or like me, many are hundreds of miles away from their family. It is so important within our community that we make connections with each other; that we be there for each other. Many of us need to find our families of choice. The folks who love us and accept us just as we are and invite us into their homes and lives as a member of the family.

One place to find our families of choice is in the church. Oh, I know, the church doesn't have the answers for everything and everyone. It's also filled with imperfect people just like other organized institutions that surround us. But I have found it to be one of the best places to make connections. It is a place to develop wonderful friendships and even life-long relationships. This is one of the important reasons for a church home.

So before we get too much further into the holiday season, find a house of worship that fits you and make some connections. Also let me extend an invitation to you to come to MCC of the Spirit in Harrisburg. Our worship services are at 10am on Sunday and we have a Bible study class on Wednesday evenings at 6:30. We will also have a Christmas Cantata on Dec. 18th at 3pm and a Christmas Eve Service at 7pm.

Wherever you may find yourself this holiday season, may you find yourself surrounded by friends and family. May you be richly blessed as you find that place that brings you joy, renew old connections, and make new ones.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays.

Info: MCC of the Spirit, 2973 Jefferson Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110

What Countries Have the Most Women in Their National Legislatures?

The road to power for women in government has not been an easy one. Even today in some nations it is frowned upon for women to be in government. Africa elected its first woman as head of state in Liberia, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, in 2005. Recently we have seen a lesbian Prime Minister in Iceland and the new Prime Minister of Denmark this week is a woman.

So which countries have the most women in their national legislative branches? America doesn't even make the top ten and number one might surprise you. Here are the top ten and the percentage of their Parliaments, Congress or National Legislatures that are women.

1. Rwanda (49%)
2. Sweden (45%)
3. Denmark (38%)
4. Finland (38%)
5. Netherlands (37%)
6. Norway (36%)
7. Cuba (36%)
8. Belgium (35%)
9. Costa Rica (35%)
10. Austria (34%)

Prime Minister Johanna Siguroardottir of Iceland

5 Lesbians from History

Selected from "Queers in History" by Keith Stern.

Sophia Kovalevsky

1. Jane Addams: She is the first American woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931. She was born in 1860 and was known for being a social reformer, peace activist and strong advocate for women's rights.

2. Colonel Greta Cammermeyer: She become famous when she was dismissed from the military in 1989 for being a lesbian. She spoke all over the country and her life was turned into a TV movie starring Glenn Close.

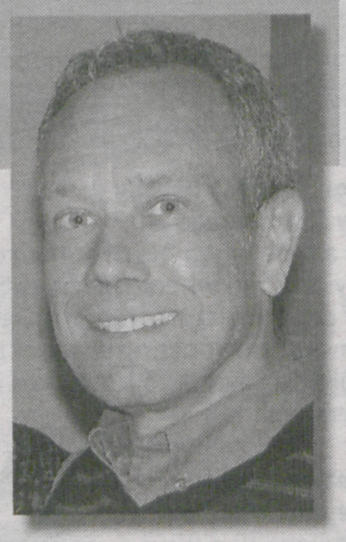
3. Ruth Benedict: She was the 'other anthropologist.' Her book "Patterns of Culture" was a definitive work on Native Americans and included discussions about homosexuality. She had trysts with the more famous anthropologist Margaret Mead.

4. Sophia Kovalevsky: A Russian scientist (1850 to 1891) who obtained the "Prix Bordin" from the French Academy. She won for her work on "the Caucy-Kovalevsky Theorem of Differential Equations". She was a long time lover of the Duchess of Cajanello.

5. Angelina Weld Grimke: One of the leading feminists in the Harlem Renaissance. At the request of W.E.B. DuBois for more African-American literature she wrote the play "Rachel." She became a renowned poet of that age and had a seven year relationship with Georgia Douglas Johnson.

stonewall democrats

By Steve Dorko
Chair, Capital Region
Stonewall Democrats



President Obama – Our Choice for 2012

The Capital Region Stonewall Democrats voted this fall to declare an early endorsement to re-elect President Obama in 2012. Taking this action, our regional chapter echoed the National Stonewall Democrats in stating, "A victory for President Obama in 2012 is a victory for the LGBT Community."

President Obama's record on LGBT issues is without question the best record of any administration to date. The CRSD endorsed Barack Obama because of his accomplishments on advancing LGBT issues, including (1) the repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell (2) the largest number of appointments of LGBT people to major administration posts (3) the order that the Department of Justice stop defending Defense Of Marriage Act (4) the banning of discrimination based on gender identity in federal employment (5) the direction that the Department of Health and Human Services ensure hospital visitation and decision-making rights for LGBT individuals (6) the funding of studies on LGBT endangered youth (7) the funding for LGBT seniors , and (8) the support of LGBT issues at the U.N. including his signature on the U.N. Declaration on Gay Rights.

The election of any of the potential Republican candidates threatens to halt the progress made in the last three years. Given the positions the GOP candidates are already taking with regards to the LGBT community, one can readily assume that a GOP victory would be detrimental to the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in America.

We still have much work to be done in our fight for equality. The Capital Region Stonewall Democrats pledge to roll up our sleeves to work our hardest to be sure we have the President on our side for the next four years to continue the fight. We urge all LGBT citizens to get involved and to help us ensure a victory for Barack Obama in 2012.

thinking out loud

By Abby Dees

LGBT young people are quietly in the fight of their lives

In my travels lately as a professional gay I've been speaking at a lot of PFLAG meetings. No matter where I go, the following people are always there: hard core straight allies with "Ask me about my lesbian daughter!" pins permanently affixed to their chests, pink goth LGBT teens, and well-meaning deer-in-the-headlights parents whose kids just came out to them. They're all cool for different reasons: first, the straight allies, because they put to shame the rest of us blasé queers who have protested nary a school-board homophobe in years; second, the kids, because they're brave and fabulous and it sucks being in high school; and third, those newbie PFLAG parents, because they're diving in with both feet, albeit totally freaked out.

But I've noticed another pattern at these meeting too. While there are often a few LGBT kids who grew up, like their parents, steeped in a Sesame Street ideal of tolerance, there are always several more who grew up in deeply conservative or religious homes. At some point, nearly every one of these young people talks about attempting or thinking about suicide.

Of course I know the statistic that LGBT youth are four times more likely than straight kids to commit suicide, but it's quite another thing to meet the survivors, week after week – out in the sticks or smack in the middle of presumably hip L.A. These suicidal thoughts are as predictable as the weather.

Whether folks were sent to reparative therapy, shunned, shamed, or simply forced into an identity that was a big fat lie, the gist is that growing up in intolerant homes does nothing less than destroy lives. There is a body count.

So, a few weeks ago at yet another meeting, the familiar cross-section of folks introduced themselves, as is PFLAG tradition: the pierced bi girl who's starting a gay-straight alliance, the activist mom running a speaker's bureau at the library, the scared parents whose 14-year-old son has declared his desire to come out to everyone, and at least two young men who compared suicide attempts with bittersweet campy humor.

Then the newbie parents asked the group, "How we can keep our son safe? You hear all this horrible stuff about gay-bashing and things on the news. It's frightening to think of him out there alone."

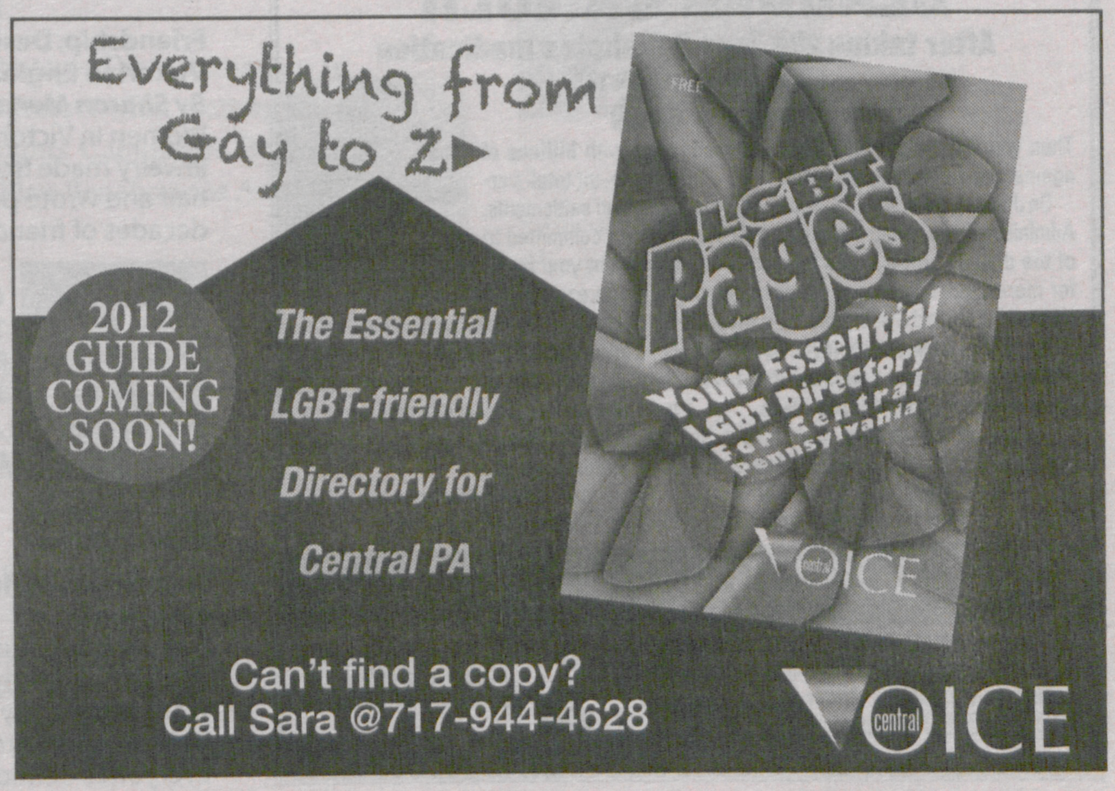
I've heard a version of this question a hundred times, but I'd never put two and two together until I looked around the room that night. I said, "The biggest threat our kids face isn't 'out there' somewhere; it's right at home."

Yes, the world is dangerous, and there are hate crimes and bullying every day. And that's just here – you really don't want to visit Uganda or Iraq in a rainbow T-shirt anytime soon. But none of that matters much if you can't survive your own family.

As I spoke, I wondered if, among these people earnestly trying to be good parents, I was in effect saying, "It's you! You are going to screw up your kid!" I felt like the guest who just sneezed all over the buffet. Still, it was suddenly so obvious that if all you do is stand by your LGBT child, their odds for survival go up by at least 400 percent.

There were nods of agreement, so I didn't need to duck out in shame. But I'm left acutely aware of the irony that while we're fighting publicly to have our chosen families legally recognized, LGBT young people are quietly in the fight of their lives, every day, in their own family homes. We can't prevail if they can't.

Abby Dees is a civil rights attorney-turned-author who has been in the LGBT rights trenches for 25+ years.



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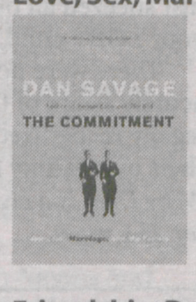
The Commitment
Love, Sex, Marriage, and My Family
By Dan Savage



In a time when much of the country sees red whenever the subject of gay marriage comes up, Dan Savage, outspoken author of the column Savage Love - makes it personal.

Queer
The Ultimate LGBT Guide of Teens
By Kathy Belge

Between Women
Friendship, Desire and Marriage in Victorian England
By Sharon Marcus

Women in Victorian England wore jewelry made from each other's hair and wrote poems celebrating decades of friendship.

Fat Girls and Lawn Chairs
By Cheryl Peck

Cheryl Peck has many stories to tell of her naughty cat, her quirky family and her experiences as a large gay woman in the American heartland.

Cool Thing
The Best New Gay Fiction from Young American Writers
By Blair Mastbaum and Will Fabro

...a fun and edgy anthology of hot new fiction by young gay writers

The International Homosexual Conspiracy
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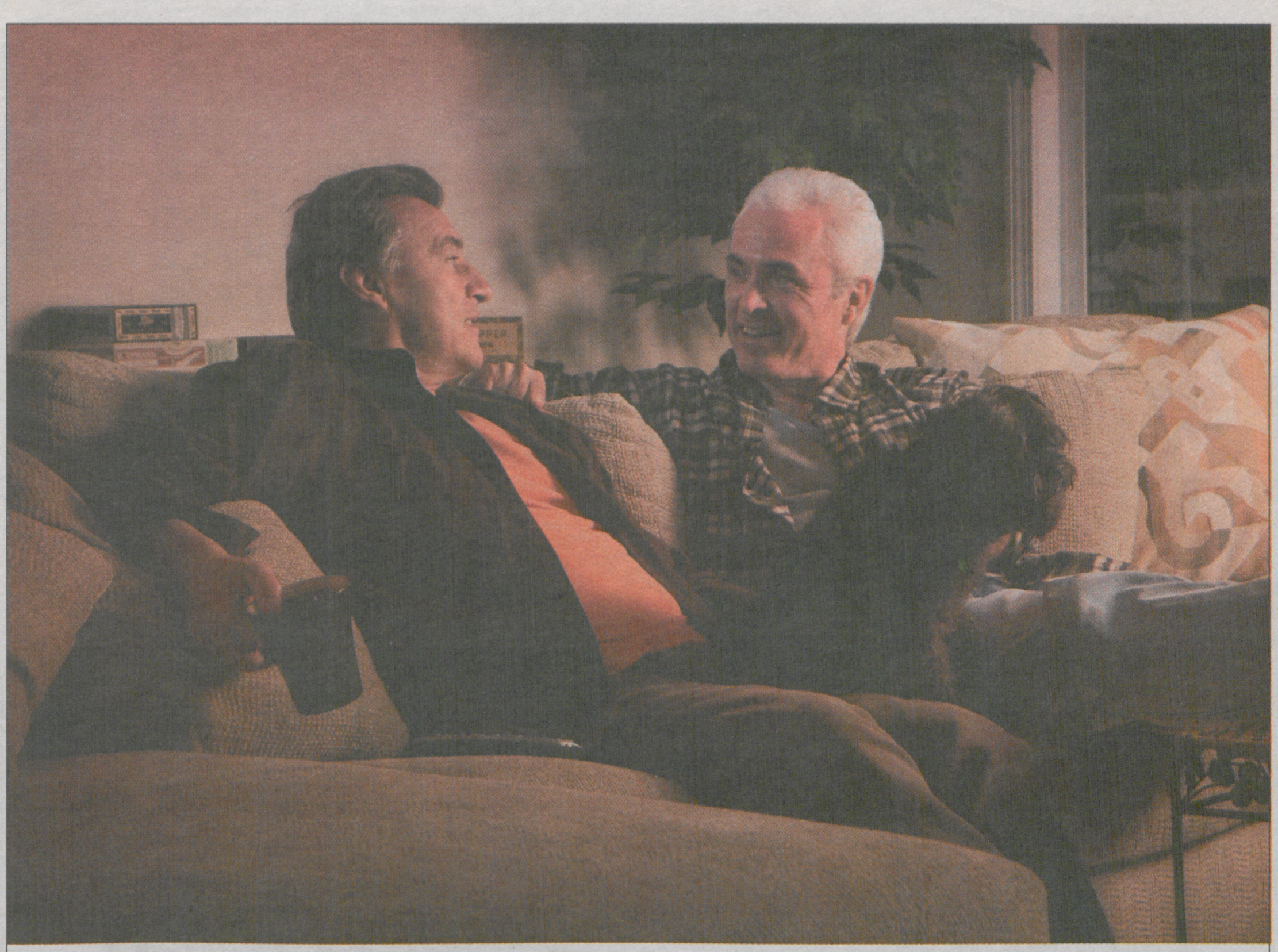

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